University of Alberta

Power, policies, and politics: Women's involvement in Dene games in the Northwest Territories

by

©

Audrey Rhiannon Giles

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Canada

This work is dedicated to...
the residents of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e,
Jean Marie River/ Thek'ehdeli, and
Fort Simpson/Liidlii Kue
– and especially the children who live there...
My sisters...
My furry family: Tundra, Moxie, & Beaker...
And, with much love and thanks, Panther...
Mahsi cho for everything.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
~Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

Abstract

Investigations of sport and recreation in Canada have, with very few exceptions, been limited to the portion of our country that borders the United States. Sport history, sport sociology, and the few sport anthropology texts that exist virtually ignore the recent developments in sport and recreation above the 60th parallel, particularly those that pertain to women. As a result, the current study of sport and recreation in Canada is incomplete and continues a tradition of giving voice to dominant groups while marginalizing the experiences of minority groups and women. However, the stories of those who do not comfortably reside in Eurocanadian society need to be shared. As Denis (1997) points out, Eurocanadians could benefit from discovering that they, in fact, have something to learn from Aboriginal peoples' ways; traditions surrounding Dene women's participation in physical practices are no exception.

This dissertation examines how competing notions of both tradition and community in Dene settlements create tensions for the delivery of and participation in programs involving physical practices, particularly Dene games. The Arctic Winter Games (AWG) is the point of articulation for Dene games and Dene communities. It serves as a paradoxical example of a unique celebration of Northern culture that concomitantly homogenizes Dene practices and people, especially women, through the standardization of Dene games events, thus erasing inter- and intra-community differences in participation. As such, women's involvement in Dene games can be investigated using Foucaultian poststructuralism, notions of tradition, the politics of difference, Berry's (2001) acculturation framework, feminist development theory, and King's (2003) understanding of the ways in which stories operate. Importantly, though,

Dene games provide a lens through these very frameworks can be examined. This bidirectional approach towards analysis is taken up in this text, allowing for an interrogation of what is at stake – the power relations and associated complexities - with women's participation in Dene games.

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List of Abbreviations

ASCWA	Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic
AWG	Arctic Winter Games
AWGIC	Arctic Winter Games International Committee
DCFN	Dehcho First Nations
DTGA	Denendeh Traditional Games Association
GAD	Gender and Development
GNWT	Government of the Northwest Territories
JMR	Jean Marie River
NWT	Northwest Territories
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development

A Preamble

It's 2002 and I'm in the Fort Simpson airport, getting ready to go to the North American Indigenous Games to conduct some research for the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic. A man with a handlebar moustache, who I recognize as working for the Territorial Government, sits down beside me as we wait to board the plane. We chat about his work. We chat about my studies. With supreme arrogance, he says that he is shocked that I'm "allowed" to get a Ph.D. by studying Dene Games.

I'm sitting with my friend Jennie's family in the Vietnamese Noodle House on Franklin Ave – the main strip – in Yellowknife in May, 2003. Her uncle asks me what I study, as someone, probably Jennie's mother, has told him that I'm a grad student. I tell him that I study Dene Games. Without missing a beat, he tells me that he thinks those games are "stupid." Inhaling deeply and feigning patience, I disagree. "Of course they're stupid," he insists. "They get their fingers all bloody and broken when they play." "Knuckle hop is an Arctic Sport, an Inuit game, it's not a Dene game," I tell him. "They're still stupid," he repeats.

Introduction

Investigations of sport and recreation in Canada have, with very few exceptions, been limited to the portion of our country that borders the United States. Sport history, sport sociology, and the few sport anthropology texts that exist virtually ignore the recent developments in sport and recreation above the 60th parallel, particularly those that pertain to women. As a result, the current study of sport and recreation in Canada is incomplete and continues a tradition of giving voice to dominant groups while marginalizing the experiences of minority groups and women. However, the stories of those who do not comfortably reside in Eurocanadian society need to be shared. As Denis (1997) points out, Eurocanadians could benefit from discovering that they, in fact, have something to learn from Aboriginal peoples' ways; traditions surrounding Dene women's participation in physical practices[1]are no exception.

The Arctic Winter Games (AWG) is the point of articulation for Dene games and Dene communities. It serves as a paradoxical example of a unique celebration of Northern culture that concomitantly homogenizes Dene practices and people, especially women, through the standardization of Dene games events, thus erasing inter- and intra-community differences in participation. In examining different aspects of Dene games, I raise important questions about several theoretical lenses, their underlying assumptions and ensuing politics. As a result, while Dene games are the point around which discussions in this dissertation revolve, they alone are not the focus; in addition, I raise and investigate broader issues concerning power, policies, and politics.

A History of Dene Games

According to *Dene Games: A Culture and Resource Manual* (Heine, 1999),

> There is a basic unity of Dene culture, and it is expressed by the way the people were connected to and survived on the land. What just about all groups of the Dene had in common was that surviving on the land meant travelling on the land. It was through their travels that the people most closely connected with the land. (p. 1.6)

Heine also notes that Dene games were heavily influenced by the connection between travel and life on the land. Strength, endurance, speed, and accuracy were necessary for travelling and hunting on the land and were often practiced by playing traditional games. Furthermore,

> The close link between games and the traditional way of life is also shown by the kinds of equipment used in most games, that is, very little to none. On the trail, people relied mainly on their own strength. They were able

> to pack heavy loads, but not everything could be taken along…People generally knew how to make their own equipment for playing traditional games. (p. 1.37)

While Dene games have been played in Denendeh[2] for hundreds of years, there were regional and even community-based differences in the way that these games were played.

According to Paraschak (1983), the first Dene Games took place in Rae-Edzo in 1977. This multi-community sporting and cultural festival was organized by the Dene-U Celebration Committee with the help of a grant from the Government of the Northwest Territories Recreation Division. This first set of Dene Games revolved around a softball tournament which drew participants from communities close to Rae-Edzo. The Games remained in this format until 1979, after which they did not occur for two years. In 1980, the Dene Games Association, which was comprised of the same people who sat on the Dene-U Celebration Committee, held an organizational meeting that was funded by the GNWT. The result of this meeting was the 1981 Dene Games, which was held in Rae-Edzo, and once again focused on a softball tournament, but also included several traditional games (Paraschak, 1983). The Dene Games then became established as an annual multi-community sport festival that rotated between communities. Events typically included: axe throw, bannock making, bow and arrow shoot, coin toss, canoe races, Dene baseball, dryfish making, fish filleting and frying, log splitting, spear throw, tea boiling, and tug-of-war. In 1999 the funding of the Dene Games changed and communities were instead encouraged to use the current funding system to develop Dene games within each community by holding workshops. However, in 2002 the Dene Games were once again held as an inter-community event in Fort Resolution. Thus, Dene games have been constructed over time and organized in different ways in order to meet different needs and deal with the constraints of various groups.

Dene games are not just played in regional festivals, but are also played at the AWG, a multi-sport competition and cultural festival for the circumpolar region. Though the AWG began in 1970, the Dene Games component was not added until 1990. The traditional games that were selected as Dene Games events at the AWG differ from the events at regional Dene Games: finger pull, stick pull, snowsnake, pole push, and hand games. Unlike the mixed sex categories at regional Dene Games, the AWG has only ever had categories for men. A category for Senior Men has been available since the inception of the Dene Games category, while a category for Junior Men was only added at the 2002 AWG. However, in recent years there has been a movement to create categories for women, a movement which has resulted in the addition of a Junior Girl's category to the 2004 AWG, which were held in Northern Alberta. The addition of a Junior Girl's category clearly aligns the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) with gender equity policies as well as with groups that have lobbied for women's involvement in the Dene Games portion of the AWG. According to AWGIC member Ian Legaree, the idea of a Junior Girl's category in the Dene Games

> has been raised a number of times in recent years. A primary factor for the AWGIC though is support from at least three jurisdictions. Before the 2003 selection process there simply did not seem to be enough interest…[F]or the 2004 selection process…the NWT, Yukon and Alaska all strongly supported the inclusion. (personal communication, May 16, 2003)

However, the addition of a Junior Girl's category can also be juxtaposed with the efforts of a now defunct group called the Denendeh Traditional Games Association (DTGA), which formed in 2002. This group, which was comprised of men - many of whom were and are involved in sport and recreation – wanted to become the Territorial Sport Organization for Dene Games. The DTGA asserted that women did not traditionally play hand games, a form of stick gambling, and thus should not play hand games in a contemporary setting. They also prohibited women from participating in DTGA sponsored hand games tournaments (Kay, 2002). Here we find a division, a fracture line in the tradition of Dene games.

Conditions of Possibility

I suggest that there are five main "conditions of possibility" (Foucault, 1970, p. xxii) that have contributed to the current placement of women within the discursive field of Dene games, which can be understood as comprising competing ways of organizing and giving meaning to the world: the notion of universal human rights, the Indian Act, residential schools, discourses surrounding menstruation, and use of the term "tradition" with regard to Aboriginal communities and practices. The first four of these five conditions are elucidated here, with additional analysis of discourses of menstruation appearing throughout this dissertation. The fifth condition, the use of tradition in Aboriginal communities, is examined at length in Chapter 3.

Universal Human Rights

The idea of universal human rights is one that is fraught with complexities. We live in a world where people are not treated equally. Indeed, discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, ability, and sexual orientation is rampant. How, then, does one decide which values are universal rather than merely reflecting the dominant group's ideals? Why are some values worthy of being adopted by the world while others are not?

Nussbaum (2000) addresses these very issues and how they are relevant for women in India. She states, "[f]eminists should not assume without argument that those [Hindu and Muslim norms of female modesty, deference, and obedience] are bad norms, incapable of constructing good and flourishing lives for women" (p. 6). This argument can be easily extended to Dene women in the NWT (Giles, 2002)[3]. While boys and men participate in sport, girls and women frequently stay in the home to attend to familial responsibilities. When girls and women have some leisure time, it is common for them to be spectators rather than participants. Does this situation demand rectification in the way of a gender equity policy? As Nussbaum wisely states, objections to norms concerning typically feminine behaviour "oversimplifies tradition, ignoring counter-traditions of female defiance and strength…[and] in general forgetting to ask women themselves what they think of these norms" (p. 7). Perhaps sport is not all that relevant to the lives of Dene women? If the fight for inclusion in sport is not a battle that they deem worthy of their time and energy, how does a gender equity policy represent the needs/desires of these women? Furthermore, gender equity policies developed by sport administrators with "true missionary zest" (Paraschak, 1982, p. 427) also have the potential to cause harm. Kassam and Wuttunee (1997) state that Aboriginal women are already oppressed by the "pent up rage of men whose lives were turned upside down by the social change [that came with colonization] and took their frustration out on their wives" (p. 56). For this reason, we need to remain cognizant of the fact that change in sport policy has the potential to cause social change, change that might come at a price that may be too high for some Dene women to pay.

Nevertheless, Nagengast (1997) finds that cultural relativity, a notion typically evoked to encourage respect for difference, is often "deployed to excuse, rationalize, or explain the differential treatment before the law of women, minorities, and indigenous groups and to justify what many call human rights abuses" (p. 353). While differential access to competitive sporting opportunities is far more benign than differential access to education, legal resources, or even the freedom to display one's face, certain parallels exist, parallels that may, in part, be explained by the Indian Act.

The Indian Act

The Government of Canada's gender-based policy decisions concerning Aboriginal peoples have caused great debate and legislative reform over the past century. In the pamphlet *Aboriginal Women: Meeting the Challenges, Opening Doors for Future Generations,* the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development states:

> Traditionally, Aboriginal women have commanded the highest respect within their communities as the givers of life. Women contributed to decisions about family, property rights, and education and were the keepers of their peoples' cultural traditions. While clear divisions of labour existed, men's and women's work was equally valued. (Government of Canada, n.d.)

Interestingly, and paradoxically, it was the very same branch of the Canadian government that, in 1869, added "an Act for the gradual enfranchisement of Indians" to the British North America Act (Tobias, 1983). This legislation was later reformulated into the

Indian Act, a piece of legislation that attempted – and, one might argue, continues to attempt – to "civilize" Aboriginal peoples into the Eurocanadian, masculinist mainstream.

Passed in 1876, the Indian Act has been used to create and maintain conditions that allow for sex-based discrimination. For example, Section 12(1)(b) of the Act removed Indian status from women who married non-Indian men (Holmes, 1987). The loss of Indian status had a devastating impact on Aboriginal women who were cut off from their traditions and heritage not by choice, but by a colonial law. Under Section 12 (1)(b), women who married non-status men were forced to leave their home reserves and give up all rights and "benefits" associated with being Aboriginal. Although Bill C-31 was created to remove all discrimination that existed in the Indian Act, it instead created new forms of sex-based discrimination. For example, women who lost their status by marrying non-Aboriginals before 1985 can now pass Indian status onto their children, but not their children's children (Holmes, 1987).

Most telling, however, is the fact that, as a result of a 1978 amendment, the Indian Act is exempt from the application of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Weaver, 1993). As a result, colonial policy – policy that has been supported by Aboriginal groups such as the National Indian Brotherhood and the Assembly of First Nations – serves to create and reinforce sex-based differences between Aboriginal men and women (Weaver, 1993). Male (and female) complacency with sex-based differences in the application of the Indian Act has created a discursive field which enables discriminatory action towards those who inhabit the subject position of "Aboriginal female."

Residential Schools

> *[I]t was a residential school I went to [in Fort Simpson]; there were no traditional games, we weren't even allowed to speak our language. (D. Jumbo, personal communication, Aug. 7, 2002)*

According to Morrison (1998), "[b]eginning around 1850, Anglicans and Catholics engaged in a hot rivalry, a race for souls, that would continue for many decades" (p. 55). Indeed, this rivalry extended into the education system, as it was these very missionaries who set up the first schools north of the 60th parallel (Morrison, 1998), including residential schools in Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson. Residential schools removed children from their families and systematically stripped them of their culture, practices, and language, while they also resulted in the movement of entire families from the bush into communities that had educational institutions. These changes had a vast impact on traditional physical practices which, as outlined above, were practised mostly in the bush.

Having missionaries as school teachers in Aboriginal communities throughout Canada worked to the advantage of both the federal government and religious groups. Morrison points out that

> [f]rom the government's point of view, it permitted the discharge of their obligation to educate Native people at the lowest possible cost, since the missionary teachers, especially the Roman Catholics, worked for almost nothing. From the point of view of the churches, the government support for the schools was a subsidy that permitted intense proselytizing of young Native people during their most impressionable years. (p. 59)

The Government of Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996) paints an unflinching picture of residential schools and the colonial project with which they were associated. According to the RCAP, the residential school system consisted of concerted efforts to rid Aboriginal peoples of Aboriginal languages, traditions, and beliefs; in short, to turn "savage" children into "civilized" adults" who embodied the "Canadian way." Eurocanadian-stream physical practices were included in such efforts:

> In school, in chapel, at work and even at play the children were to learn the Canadian way. Recreation was re-creation. Games and activities would not be the "boisterous and unorganized games" of "savage" youth. Rather they were to have brass bands, football, cricket, baseball and above all hockey 'with the well regulated and...strict rules that govern our modern games', prompting 'obedience to discipline' and thus contributing to the process of moving the children along the path to civilization. (Government of Canada, 1996, online)

With ideology that ran counter to so many Aboriginal practices, one might wonder why Aboriginal peoples allowed their children to attend such schools. One explanation is that in 1945 Mothers' Allowances were instituted for all Canadian mothers who were over the age of 16 (Abel, 1993; Morrison, 1998). In order to receive the Allowance, however, each mother's school aged children had to attend school. Morrison notes that "[g]iven the importance of the Mothers' Allowance to families with low cash incomes…this provision served as a powerful incentive for parents to send their children to school" (p. 154). Abel (1993), however, takes issue with the idea that Mothers' Allowances were used in a manipulative way to force Aboriginal families to send their children to school:

> It is widely believed that the government used family allowances as leverage to force parents to send their children to school, but clearly many

> parents of that generation saw the situation quite differently. The money made it possible for them to obtain what they themselves wanted for their children. (p. 236)

The opportunity for schooling/the forced relocation of children into residential and day schools resulted in many parents establishing more permanent residences in the communities in which educational facilities were located. As a result, practices that were heavily tied to life on the land, such as Dene games and menstrual traditions, were practised with less regularity or were banned by missionaries all together. Current education practices and curricula issues are discussed in Chapter 4.

Menstruation

In many Aboriginal communities across Canada, menstruation has played a significant role in women's exclusion from participation in a wide variety of Aboriginal cultural pursuits, including sport, though it has received scant attention in the existing literature. Two categories of opinions are typically offered concerning the reasons behind women's exclusion during menstruation, especially from activities of religious/spiritual importance: impurity/pollution and power. Heine (1991) found that Tlingit men participated in cleansing rituals to improve their luck prior to playing games. Women, on the other hand, rarely participated in these rituals and were considered to be especially impure during menstruation. As a result, Tlingit women were considered to be unfit for participation in such games. Other authors have also suggested that menstruation brings with it a connotation of impurity. According to Swanton (1928), "disease was supposed to emanate from [Creek] women during their monthly periods and attack men" (p. 651). Mandelbaum (1979) found that

> [t]he presence of a menstruating woman was believed to defile a religious ceremony and she was forbidden to come in contact with any religious paraphernalia. If a menstruating woman were among the onlookers at any ceremony, the supernatural powers would take offense and bring about an untoward occurrence. (p. 145-6)

Similarly, Adair (1775) reported that if a woman did not remove herself from spiritual activities while she was menstruating, she could be accused of causing any misfortune that might befall her people.

Along the same lines, Helm's fieldwork in Thek'ehdeli/JMR from 1951-1952 led her to the conclusion that "[c]ertain believes and practices [in Thek'ehdeli/JMR] have a common underlying theme, the danger of blood and the concomitant need to handle it carefully" (2000, p. 276). Helm found that "all" (p. 276) women in Thek'ehdeli/JMR observed menstrual taboos, which required women to sit in one corner of their house and abstain from all activities, including household chores, while menstruating. According to Helm, failure to observe theses practices was believed to "bring tuberculosis to her husband and the children and (apparently the more common explanation) would bring bad luck to her husband in his trapping, snaring, and hunting" (pp. 276-277). Many other authors have also found that menstruating women were sequestered from Aboriginal communities during menstruation (cf. Goulet 1998; Irwin, 1994; Ryan, 1995).

The legacy of Euro-Christian and Victorian values, as well as Western feminism's understanding of patriarchy, has represented the dominant frameworks for understanding menstruating women's participation in sport. However, some Aboriginal women take issue with menstruation being depicted as a "manifestation of female sin, contamination and inferiority" (Anderson, 2000, p. 75) and instead offer a different explanation for their exclusion from sport during menstruation. Anderson (2000) asserts that women's segregation during menstruation was based not on impurity but on the enhanced power that women have during this time. For example, in the past, menstruating Cree women were often sent to moon lodges where they would carry out their own practices and celebrations (Anderson, 2000). So, although they were separated from the rest of their community, they were not completely marginalized. Certainly, in contemporary times, moon lodges and ceremonies celebrating women's power are in short supply. Anderson finds that "women are beginning to look for alternatives to the simple 'You can't come into this ceremony, because you are on your time.' We need to know, then, what *can* we do? Where *can* we go" (p. 167; her emphasis)?

Epistemology

This research project is informed by constructionist epistemology. According to Crotty (1998), constructionism is the view that "*all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and the world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context*" (p. 42; his emphasis). Crotty further notes that when a person is born, s/he inherits a system of meaningful symbols – ways of understanding the world. While culture bestows meaning on certain things, by the same token, it leads us to ignore others. As a result, my research asked residents of Northern communities to reflect upon their own social context, meaningful symbols, and their ensuing behaviour in an attempt to foster a new richness in understanding participation in physical practices and menstrual traditions in both Eurocanadian and Aboriginal ways of knowing.

Undoubtedly, there are those who would argue that my privileged position as a middle class, Eurocanadian graduate student calls into question my ability to conduct research *on* Aboriginal women that is of any significant use, value or merit. For example, Nkululeko (1987) asks, "[c]an an oppressed nation or segment of it…rely on knowledge produced, researched and theorized by others, no matter how progressive, who are members of the oppressor nation" (p. 88)? Of greatest significance is the fact that I did not conduct research *on* Dene women, but "research *by*, *for*, and *with* them" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 28). Thus, I attempted to remove myself from being a secure basis for the generation of knowledge and instead relied on the wisdom of the Dene women and men with whom I worked to guide my research.

This research project purposely uses constructionism, feminist poststructuralism, and critical ethnography together. Crotty (1998) notes that constructionism drives home the idea that there is no such thing as a true or valid interpretation: "'Useful', 'liberating', 'rewarding' interpretations, yes. 'True or 'valid' interpretations, no" (p. 48). Certainly, one Dene woman's "truth" might be quite different from that of another Dene woman's or the researcher's – a position that is clearly supported by the trilogy of this project's proposed epistemology, theoretical framework, and methodology.

Theoretical Perspective

Over thirty-five years ago, Douglas (1967) wrote that "throughout the Western world today there exists a general belief that one knows something only when it has been counted" (p. 163). It is profoundly disheartening that, over a quarter of a century later, quasi-scientific methods continue to be viewed as more legitimate than theoretical perspectives that seek to interrogate and even undermine the foundations upon which much modern thought and theory rest. Indeed, the tenacious clinging to seemingly safe post-positivist paradigms often results in poststructuralist scholars spending more time justifying their work than actually dealing with the more pressing theoretical issues at hand, a situation that Moore (1994) has labeled "anthro(a)pology." Grimshaw (1999) aptly summarizes the collective frustration of poststructural anthropologists:

> one is called upon to explain, to argue, to contextualise one's work in relation to a professionally legitimated field. It is deeply frustrating because, of course, the innovation is driven by a desire to subvert those very constraints and to challenge the conventional expectations of an academic. (p. 124)

Indeed, far from being seen as the saving grace of what some view to be a largely dated and out of vogue discipline, poststructuralism has been seen as a proverbial thorn in the side of many anthropologists. As Moore (1994) states, "objectivism's death was for anthropology not a burden lifted, but a prop kicked out from underneath" (p. 355). In this dissertation – as illustrated with particular force in Chapter 6 - I feel no compulsion to contribute to the existing wealth of anthro(a)pology. Instead, I engage with poststructural theory deliberately and unapologetically.

The postmodern condition and poststructuralism have created a crisis of sorts for anthropology. At the root of this crisis is the "realization that anthropologists produce not truth but texts, texts inescapably fictional…and texts hence eminently deconstructible" (Moore, 1994, p. 345). Urry (1984) traces anthropology's objectivist roots back to Radcliffe-Brown:

> [His] claim that social anthropology was a generalizing science and that its task was to establish scientific laws of society was to have a more profound effect on the conduct of fieldwork. A spirit of positivism in anthropological inquiry was further encouraged and the belief that "objective" data could be collected through the utilization of rigorous techniques encouraged the development of new field methods. (p. 54)

Maina (2004) details the basic elements of positivist anthropological research, with which, notably, she takes issue:

> The researchers should stand apart from their subject and think of it as having an independent object-like existence with no intrinsic meaning. The knower and that which is or can be known are considered separate, so that the social scientist can adopt the role of observer of an independently existing reality. And since social investigation is a neutral activity, we should strive to eliminate all bias and preconceptions, not be emotionally involved with or have a particular attitude toward our subject... (p. 210)

Indeed, positivism was to have a lasting impact on anthropology, one that can be seen in some ethnographers' work today, though largely expressed in toned down, post-positivistic sentiments. For example, Devereux and Hoddinott (1993) find that "fieldwork…is predicated on the assumption that the researcher is collecting 'facts' and observing 'truths.' Yet in some (or perhaps all) circumstances, this view is deeply questionable" (p. 4). Indeed, in the past ethnographic research typically consisted of realist texts which attempted to construct holistic cultural (and one might add objective) accounts of the lives of exotic Others (Cole, 1991). Furthermore, there "has been the tendency to view the self of the social science observer as a potential contaminant, something to be separated out, neutralized, minimized, standardized, and controlled" (Fine, 2000, p. 108). It is these very accounts that poststructural theory has called into question.

In certain anthropology circles, the name "Foucault" is viewed as an f-word; however, the impact of Michel Foucault's work cannot be ignored. Indeed, his impact can easily be seen in the changing definition of "culture." Nagengast (1997) finds that anthropologists now typically avoid using the term "a culture". Instead,

> most agree that 'culture' is not a homogenous web of meanings that a bounded group creates and reproduces and that can be damaged by change, but, rather, that 'culture' is an evolving process, an always changing, always fragmented product of negotiation and struggle that flows from multiple axes of inequality…Further, people who share [signs and practices]…may not view them in the same way, give them the same meanings, or hold them in precisely the same reverence. (p. 356)

Such a definition of culture represents a radical departure from the "scientific" drive for Truth that characterized past anthropological inquiries.

The need for *feminist* poststructuralism is particularly great in anthropology. Clifford (1986) points out that "a great many portrayals of 'cultural' truths now appear to reflect male domains of experience" (p. 18). In a breathtaking show of irony, his oft-cited text, co-authored with George Marcus, fails to include a single essay on feminist anthropology; their reasoning hinged on the fact that feminist ethnography "has focused either on setting the record straight about women or on revising anthropological categories (for example, the nature/culture opposition). It has not produced either unconventional forms of writing or a developed reflection on ethnographic textuality as such" (pp. 20-21). They further justified their decision by stating, "As editors, we decided not to try and 'fill out' the volume by seeking additional essays. This seemed to be tokenism and to reflect an aspiration to false completeness" (p. 21). As a result of the myopic, patriarchal practices that continue to haunt (Gordon, 1997) anthropology – as well as most other disciplines - there remains a very real need for strong feminist scholarship in anthropology.

Foucault's influence can also be found in Weedon's (1987) work. She uses socialist feminism in conjunction with Foucaultian theory to develop a framework of feminist poststructuralism. Weedon states,

> [f]eminist poststructuralism…is a mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change. Through a concept of discourse…feminist poststructuralism is able, in detailed, historically specific analysis, to explain the working of power on behalf of specific interests and to analyse the opportunities for resistance to it. (p. 41)

Her conception of feminist poststructuralism views the meaning of gender as "both socially produced and variable between different forms of discourse" (p. 22). Furthermore, "[s]ocial meanings are produced within social institutions and practices in which individuals, who are shaped by these institutions, are agents of change, rather than its authors, change which may either serve hegemonic interests or challenge existing power relations" (p. 25).

Feminist poststructuralism is useful in disrupting the artificially produced unified subject that many anthropologists have relied upon in renderings of individuals and cultural groups alike. Importantly. "poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33). As a result, meta-narratives in ethnography necessarily fail (Butler, 1990) because they cannot account for the fragmented nature of human existence.

A Foucaultian understanding of power varies from top down approaches. Foucault (1980a) finds that

> [o]ne impoverishes the question of power if one poses it solely in terms of legislation and constitution, in terms solely of the state and the state apparatus. Power is quite different from and more complicated, dense and pervasive than a set of laws or a state apparatus. (p. 158).

Indeed, Foucault (1978) views power as a multiplicity of complex force relations that can support or reverse each other, create chains and systems or disjunctions and contradictions, and are "embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, and in the various social hegemonies" (p. 93). Foucault encourages us to view power's condition of possibility as emerging not from a single central point, but rather from a local and unstable "moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power" (p. 93). As a result, "[p]ower is everywhere…because it comes from everywhere" (p. 92).

According to Foucault (1978), "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (p. 100). The term "discourse" can be used to refer to all forms of talk and text (Gill, 2000). Henriques et al. (1984) find that "discourses are not non-contradictory, uniform processes but are complex systems of regulated differences that are intricated [*sic*] in ongoing struggles involving power and social relations" (p. 114). In addition, it is important to note that while discourses transmit and produce power, silence, too, acts as a shelter for power (Foucault, 1978). As Foucault (1978) points out, where there is power there is also resistance, as power can never exist outside of power relations. Foucault (1978) further notes that

> there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. (p. 96).

Nevertheless, we cannot divide discourses into the categories of accepted/dominant and excluded/dominated. We must instead identify that there are "a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100) at different times. Foucault proposed the concept of the discursive field "as part of an attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity, and power" (Weedon, 1987, p. 35). However, not all discourses found within a discursive field carry the same amount of influence. For instance, Eurocanadian discourses are often privileged over those stemming from Aboriginal people and practices (Cairns, 1988). Indeed, discourses that challenge the status quo are "likely to be marginal to existing practice and dismissed by the hegemonic system of meanings and practices as irrelevant or bad" (Weedon, 1987, p. 35). Similarly, Parker (1992) finds that "[d]iscourses both facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said (by whom, where, when)" (p. xiii).

Foucault (1980b) suggests that there exist subjugated knowledges, which he describes as

> a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity…[I]t is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work. (p. 82)

By surfacing subjugated knowledge about Dene women's participation in physical practices, as well as the role that menstrual traditions play in such participation, we are able to challenge metanarratives of physical practices that render Dene women invisible.

Oral traditions often represent a form of subjugated knowledge, and poststructural theory provides a useful framework for researchers working with communities that use oral traditions. Oral traditions have been an important part of Dene culture. Cruikshank (1995) notes that subarctic peoples were constantly on the move in their attempts to harvest resources. As a result, portability and adaptability were very important parts of material culture. She stresses that it was of critical importance for *ideas* to be portable (for example, knowledge of the construction of a snare) rather than the item itself. Hence, "'[w]ealth' in such a culture is carried in one's head rather than on one's back. It is passed from one generation to another through oral tradition. It weighs nothing and can accompany a traveler anywhere" (p. 297).

Though portable, adaptable, and a form of wealth, researchers have often viewed oral tradition as anecdotal (Cruikshank, 1995), and thus such traditions have not been treated with much respect. Part of the reluctance of researchers (and non-researchers) to treat oral tradition with the respect that it deserves stems from the fact that oral traditions represent evolving texts. Cruikshank (2000) points out that "[e]ach performance [of an oral tradition] is historically situated as the teller, the audience, and the intended meanings shift to meet the occasion" (p. 28). As a result, the telling of an oral tradition is never same the twice, as even though the same words may be used, "the relationship – the dialogue – is always shifting. Oral traditions are not natural products. They have social histories, and they acquire meaning in the situations in which they are used, in interactions between narrators and listeners" (Cruikshank, 2000, p. 40).

The textual representation of oral histories has been critiqued on the grounds that the writing of such histories fixes their meaning, resulting in a static text. However, I would argue that the meanings of oral traditions remain unfixed even in a written format, as the relationship between the reader and the text is always in flux. As Cruikshank (2000) explains, "[o]nce an orally narrated text is printed…it is open to a range of interpretations by readers as well as by listeners" (p. 35). Thus, this dissertation puts oral tradition into print in a deliberate, though careful fashion. I feel that the inclusion of oral traditions (e.g., the monster in the lake in Chapter 2) is necessary, as they provide crucial details for understanding some contemporary situations and, hence, play a critical role in surfacing subjugated knowledge.

Methodology

> *The basic problem is neither the moral uncertainty involved in telling stories about how other people live nor the epistemological one involved in casting those stories in scholarly genres – both of which are real enough, are always there, and go with the territory. The problem is that now that such matters are coming to be discussed in the open, rather than covered over with a professional mystique, the burden of authorship seems suddenly heavier. (Geertz, 1988, p.138)*

> *We cannot continue to regard the 'writing up' of ethnographic work as innocent. On the contrary, a thorough recognition of the essential reflexivity of ethnographic work extends to the work of reading and writing as well. We must take responsibility for how we choose to represent ourselves and others in the texts we write. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 258)*

Critical ethnography is a genre of ethnography that reconsiders "how examining, interpreting, and writing 'local cultures' can be done in ways which recognize the complexities of a rapidly changing world and the interactions between local cultures and 'invisible' macro-structures that have real effects" (Cole, 1991, p. 38). Critical ethnographers challenge ethnographic renderings that rely upon carefully selected and excluded quotations that are chosen based on their consistency with the author's hypothesis (Cole, 1991). Thomas (1993) describes ethnography as "the tradition of cultural description and analysis that displays meanings by interpreting meanings" (p. 4). He further finds that ethnography is hard work that is much more frustrating than other research methods. The frustration associated with ethnography reaches far beyond the difficulties associated with gaining access to a community or even collecting data. In these socially (hyper)-aware times, the words "anthropology" and "ethnography" are laden with visions of politically incorrect, white, male researchers committing extraordinary violence against a community of defenseless Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, Geertz (1988) notes, "anthropologists have added to their 'is it decent?'

worry (Who are we to describe them?) an 'Is it possible?' one (Can Ethiopian love be sung in France?)" (p. 135). Such questions have resulted in anthropologists engaging in reflexive processes in order to bring to light any possible bias that might colour their research.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) state that reflexivity "implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interest that these locations confer upon them" (p. 16). Thus, reflexivity entails more than a brief critical self-examination of one's race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. In addition, reflexivity necessarily demands the interrogation of one's sources of funding (Shore, 1999), as well as the very research methods that one uses.

Feminist and postcolonial theorists, particularly those from the Third World, have long argued that one's positionality plays a large role in the kind of work that one is able to do, and the possibilities that one can envision for the world. The questions of who can speak for whom, as well as who can represent whom, are central areas for critique amongst feminist and postcolonial theorists. Feminist anthropologists and postcolonial theorists also share a concern over creating 'Others' (Wolf, 1992), as well as representing them as deviations from the mainstream (Mohanty, 1984). As a result, Shore (1999) finds that "an element of reflexivity has become almost de rigueur in most ethnographic writing" (p. 28). In order to bring to light any possible bias that might colour their research, many anthropologists turn to reflexive soul-searching. But do anthropologists have the capability to truly know themselves and represent themselves fairly? And do they all have the courage to discuss their biases, whatever they may be? Moreover, does discussing one's biases give the anthropologist the ability to get beyond them and thus achieve some sort of 'objectivity'?

The use of reflexivity to chip away at some sort of objectivity demonstrates a misguided application of critical ethnography's methods. Reflexivity does not relieve the burden of authorship. Just because one has explicitly stated that s/he is speaking or writing from her/his own, often privileged, vantage point does not minimize the fact that ethnography is, above all else, a "rendering of the actual" (Geertz, 1988, p. 143), an act of interpretation. By revealing one's biases, one does not get any closer to approaching the Truth. Instead, by engaging in reflexivity, the ethnographer acknowledges that it is impossible to access the Truth, and that his or her work is produced through the built-in filter of his or her own past experiences. As Geertz (1988) so aptly states, "the moral asymmetrics across which ethnography works and the discoursive [*sic*] complexity within which it works make any attempt to portray it as anything more than the representation of one sort of life in the categories of another impossible to defend" (p. 138).

Another aspect of critical ethnography involves paying attention to change. Change is important not only in terms of the subjects of anthropology, but also those writing ethnography. As Gardner (1999) writes, "each anthropologist's relationship with her or his experience is continually changing, just as we continually change as individuals" (p. 53). As I struggled through writing this dissertation, I realized how much my views of my own research have changed, and how they continue to change, largely as the result of my personal experiences. Indeed, Gardner (1999) notes that personal experience is a key to feminism, and thus feminist anthropology. However, she notes that attempts to locate the authors in their own texts often oversimplify the anthropologist's identities and positions. Gardner finds that anthropologists are often "trapped in the static identities of before and after her or his transformative experience [i.e., fieldwork]" (p. 53). Indeed, it would be relatively simple for me to write that I am a female, Eurocanadian, vegetarian, feminist, heterosexual, graduate student, with a deep affection for guinea pigs and dogs, who grew up in a middle-class home in suburban Toronto. However, it is more difficult to move beyond the simplified text that I just provided. How can I present my feminist ideals, ideals that are constantly thrown into flux as I learn new things about non-Western feminist perspectives? While my identity was shaped by my upbringing in Canada's largest and most multicultural city, how can I represent the changes that I have encountered as a result of living in some of Canada's smallest Dene communities? Once again, I draw on Gardner's wisdom for guidance: "what and how we know is endlessly influenced by our various shifting locations. ...our learning does not end when we finish our fieldwork and there is therefore no definitive account of it" (p. 70).

With all of the difficulties involved in ethnographic research – be they political, logistical or otherwise – one might wonder if it is a worthwhile or even valid venture. Nevertheless, though inherently problematic, ethnography has the potential to foster understanding and communication in a world where, as Geertz notes, "it is increasingly difficult to get out of each other's way" (p. 147). Furthermore, as Blanchard (2000) states, "there is still a real need for good ethnographies so that the record of sporting diversity around the world will not be lost as a result of the homogenizing influence of globalization" (p. 151). In constructing histories about Dene games, the task of recording sporting diversity around the world takes on a two-fold meaning. Blanchard (2000) likely intended his comment on the need to document sporting diversity as a call for the preservation of traditional forms of games so that they do not become relegated to the past. I, however, choose to take up the challenge in a slightly different way. Rather than trying to capture/save the authentic form of Dene games and to demonstrate how different/similar they are to other games, I instead see it as my task to construct an understanding of the diversity that exists *within* Dene games. It is the contested nature of these games, the perpetual ebb and flow of them that captures my imagination.

Following Mohanty (1991), I take there to be two projects at hand: "The first project is one of deconstructing and dismantling; the second, one of building and constructing" (p. 51). What I seek to dismantle is the colonial legacy of the exploitative Eurocanadian expert. I view this as the critical first step in building and constructing a collaborative research project that engages with community members as experts on their own lives and culture, a research project that challenges colonial legacies.

In writing about the black Caribbean diaspora, Hall (1993) notes that "[t]he ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation…They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other'" (p. 225; his emphasis). Such writing can easily be extended to Aboriginal residents of Canada's North. As the frequent focus of Canadian popular fiction and non-fiction writing, Aboriginal peoples have often encountered caricatures of themselves: the noble savage, the helpful guide to explorers, etc. These representations have led to many Aboriginal Northerners experiencing themselves as Other when they engage with such writing. Academic work, too, has the potential to further such Othering. "Expert"

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anthropologists/biologists/ecologists are often seen as the "legitimate" sources of knowledge; local Indigenous knowledge is often treated as folklore that requires verification. For instance, oral histories are rarely taken as specialized, expert knowledge. Instead, academic experts are often called upon to verify, among other things, what exactly constitutes a traditional/authentic practice, who exactly is a real Aboriginal person, and the meaning of certain beliefs. Thus, I see dismantling the idea of the academic expert who provides the authentic story of the (singular) history of a community's involvement in sport, recreation, and games as one of the main tasks at hand.

Positioning myself as a non-expert in the communities with which I do research was surprisingly easy. I am brought back to a guest lecturer who visited my graduate seminar on ethnographic field methods, discussing the role of "anthropologist as idiot," where the researcher acts as though s/he needs assistance in the tasks of daily life in order to gain an appreciation for the ways in which locals both understand and conduct their lives. This is a role in which I thrived – albeit there was no acting required. I find it somewhat amusing that Southern-based academics worry about the potential impact of my positionality as a Ph.D. student. Surely, I will be viewed as an expert by those in the North, they think. However, I feel that I was more often viewed as a child – indeed, it takes a village to raise a sport anthropologist! For instance, while in the field, I was given explicit instructions concerning how to chop wood. I was reminded time and again to "stop wandering off in the bush" on my nightly walks that took me all of fifty metres outside of the community, as I would get mauled and "there would be no one but the stray dogs around to hear [my] screams." When beading my moose hide mittens, I was often asked if I had had my tetanus shot, as I frequently stabbed my thimble-less finger. Finally, by asking interview questions about Dene games, I became constructed as the student who needed to be taught.

The fact that I was Ph.D. student held no cultural capital (Bordieu, 1990) and really did not position me as an expert within the community. For example, one afternoon, while sitting outside of the Band Office, one individual approached me and asked, "you're working on your G.E.D. [high school equivalency diploma], right, Audrey?" I explained that I was instead working on my Ph.D., which to him seemed like a colossal waste of time. Thus, rather than viewing me as working on a degree that required intelligence, theoretical savvy, and would result in me being constructed as an expert on women's involvement in Dene games, he instead viewed me as someone who needed to get a real job and stop wasting her time. In short, I needed to "grow-up." Within Northern discourses, then, I contend that I was regarded as anything but an expert. Instead, I was an "acceptable incompetent" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 99).

Methods

> *My friend Charlene, the pilot of Simpson Air's Cessna 206 that holds me, my pet guinea pig, and all of the fixings for a fine summer of fieldwork, calls into the airstrip in Trout Lake to tell the airport radio attendant that we're ten minutes out. The call is a mere formality – this community of 65 people does not have nor need a person to control air traffic. I look down at the snow and ice below me and think, "So soon? We'll be there in 10mins? I'm not ready!"*

Ethnographic fieldwork is often described as a *rite de passage* for anthropology students (Watson, 1999). As with any hazing, fieldwork leaves lasting impressions on most of those who have experienced it. For example, Grimshaw (1999) reports that the process turned her into a "hysteric" (p. 136), and confesses that her reminiscences haunt her, while Gardner (1999) describes her fieldwork as causing her to become "acutely paranoid" (p. 70). Harriss (1993), however, found that "fieldwork was a…complex psychological experience; not only something to be endured but also a marvellously enriching, conscientising, difficult and enjoyable experience" (p. 148). I could only imagine what "the field" would do to me. Like many young researchers, I found myself approaching my own fieldwork with "a mixture of romantic expectation, heroic self-image and utter terror" (Gardner, 1999, p. 49), as well as a feeling of horror at the idea that "the process is essentially parasitic" (Devereux & Hoddinott, 1999, p. 20).

Clammer (1984) points out that fieldwork can be "very problematic…when viewed historically, politically or morally" (p. 65). Furthermore, Clammer notes that there is always the

> grave danger of fieldwork creating a subject-object relationship between the fieldworker and those observed. This relationship is often…temporary and exploitative for the observer, but may have permanent and unforeseen results for the observed; and is asymmetrical, in that the fieldworker reports and analyses, but the observed may never have access to his data or have the opportunity to react to or criticize them. (p. 65)

As a result of such concerns, authors such as Lovell (1995) have asked with great insight,

> How do we go about depicting other people's lives, other people's ways, in order to produce sensitive and convincing representations, representations that can withstand the rigours of postmodern scrutiny, representations we hope will weather well, representations that may even

> meet with the approval of those whose lives and ways (or whose ancestors' lives and ways) are portrayed? (p. 1)

Toward this end, research methods needed to be selected with great care in order to produce the sort of representations about which Lovell writes.

Due to the small size of the communities in which I conducted my research, virtually all community members were aware of my research activities. While the prime target group of participants was women and men aged 12 years or older, a few younger residents felt that they had significant contributions to make towards this project, and I felt that they should be given the opportunity to do so. Other participants included municipal recreation directors, regional and territorial sport administrators from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs at the Government of the NWT, as well as Sport North, the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic, and the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC).

Snowball sampling, a form of purposeful sampling, was used to locate interview participants. Cresswell (1998) notes that snowball sampling "[i]dentifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich" (p. 119). Snowball sampling can also be used to display interesting aspects of the power/knowledge nexus. For example, while participant W may indicate that X and Y hold certain knowledge, W is also indicating that she believes that Z does not hold that knowledge. Both semi-structured and unstructured/informal interviews were conducted to gather data from the participants in this research project. Kirby and McKenna (1989) state, "the research participant is not a passive participant, simply there to talk about her or his experience. The participant may know of better or clearer questions to ask…[or] of gaps in the interview plan" (p. 68). Nevertheless, one of the difficulties with interviews, even of the semi-structured and unstructured varieties, is that they can produce a confessional-like atmosphere.

According to Foucault (1978),

> The obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, 'demands' only to surface. (p. 60)

Furthermore, Foucault finds that "next to the testing rituals, next to the testimony of witnesses, and the learned methods of observation and demonstration, the confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing truth…. Western man has become a confessing animal" (p. 59). Just as the confessional has been associated with pedagogical and psychiatric examinations, so too has the confessional come to be associated with research. Foucault (1978) found that the early concern around confessions was with what the subject was hiding from the investigator. Later on, however, confession was instead used in an attempt to reveal what the subject was hiding from him or herself, information "incapable of coming to light except gradually and through the labor of a confession in which the questioner and the questioned each had a part to play" (p. 66). Thus, the subject confesses to the expert who interprets the information back to the confessor[4]. Clearly, this pattern is often found in research, too: undermining it becomes an interesting task. Rather than building a relationship with the people with whom I conducted my research that set me up as the expert, I instead sought to employ their expertise to surface subjugated knowledges. However, I did not want merely to surface subjugated knowledges, but also wanted to use this information in order to gain a better understanding of their contributions to prevailing discourses and practices.

As a result, attempts were made to develop semi-structured interview questions with the help of the community members, as there was no place for the traditional (and one might add arrogant) assumption that the researcher is the expert. Furthermore, obtaining assistance in the development of the interview questions helped to avoid inadvertently breeching cultural protocol (Hart, 1995). I will admit that these efforts were of limited success. I found that community members seemed puzzled when I asked them for input into the questions that I should be asking. I interpreted their behaviour as indicating that they thought I was a somewhat incompetent researcher, and that they felt that I should have come to the community with the interview questions already formulated.

One of the most illuminating moments of my research, however, came when I interviewed Chief Fred Norwegian of Jean Marie River First Nation. As he explained some cultural practices to me, I asked him why they were done. He responded,

> "When we were growing up we were taught these sort of things, we were not allowed to question them. We were just to carry that on and believe that's the thing to do. You never, never ask anybody why things are done. So there's a lot of things that I believe and I still practice, but I don't know why it's done, it's sort of ingrained in me to do it. Yes, because nowadays the kids want to know why. One of the things beside I know would be why. So that would be hard. Like I went on a trap line with my

> dad when I was about 13, 14 years old and there was a beaver lodge there. And there were some sticks digging out. Cleared the snow and started chopping. Made an opening and there was a beaver trap there under the ice. Pulled it out and there was a beaver. And I took it off the trap and he rolled it around in the snow, rubbing snow on it until the whole fur was just nice and dry. And he took a knife out, sliced the tip of the nose off, the piece from the leg, and then the very end of the tail, cut a small piece off and threw it back in the water. Why? I don't know. (Personal communication, Aug. 13, 2003).

His insightful comments led me to mention the difficulties I had had with some of my interviews with Elders. When I asked a "why" question, I was often met with a translation of "I don't know." Fred then said the following:

> Yeah, I could see that you would have a bit of a problem. In order to do proper research, you have to know why. And it's not that I don't want to give it [information] to you, because it was never given to me as a Native person. It's like somebody tells you, 'this is the way it's done, you have to believe it.' Even if you didn't know the reasoning behind it, you just accepted it. That's the way it is. (Personal communication, Aug. 13, 2003)

Thus, it was perhaps not surprising that my efforts to develop questions with community members elicited a somewhat lukewarm response.

In the end, some of the broad topics that were discussed during interviews included the following: Dene women's involvement in physical practices in both historical and contemporary contexts; the notion of gender equity; Dene women's menstrual traditions; and Dene men's and women's understanding of the differences between men's and women's participation in competitive Dene games. Unstructured or informal interviews are similar to a naturally-occurring dialogue, though some questions will likely come across as somewhat artificial. Nevertheless, unstructured interviews often answer the ethnographer's unasked questions (Fetterman, 1998) and, as such, are very valuable to the research process. As a result, some unstructured interviews acted as adjuncts to the semi-structured interviews.

Participant observation is another method often associated with ethnographic fieldwork. It involves immersing oneself in a culture by participating in the lives of the research participants, while also striving to maintain a professional distance (Fetterman, 1998). Participant observation has positivist methods at its core. It relies on direct observation as a data-gathering tool, thus availing the anthropologist to data in the same way information is available to the natural scientist (Holy, 1984). Indeed, rather than relying on reports from informants, analytical objectivity is assumed to arise from the anthropologist's direct observation of the phenomena at hand (Holy, 1984).

Holy (1984) suggests that there is an important distinction that can be created between an observing participant and a participant observer. As an observing participant, the researcher observes while participating fully in the lives of those s/he is studying. As a result, the notion of an observing participant "consciously eliminates the distinction between the observer and the observed phenomena and thus radically departs from the scientific attitude of the positivistic paradigm" (p. 29). In addition, Kirby and McKenna (1989) find that "[b]eing a participant provides the opportunity to develop greater felt meaning for the experience being researched" (p. 78). While I believe that the notion of the observing participant does attempt to make important strides to reduce some of the more problematic aspects of ethnographic field methods, I do not believe that it provides a panacea. Thus, being cognizant of the need to do more than just merely join in a game of soccer, I volunteered my services as a recreation professional, as it allowed me to interact with recreation enthusiasts and thus learn about the community members' beliefs and practices associated with physical practices.

Hence, with some hesitation, I was a participating observer in the communities in which I conducted my research. Field notes were made to record observations, experiences, and portions of conversations concerning physical practices, menstrual traditions, as well as my own thoughts and feelings. Prior to the commencement of my research, I sought the advice of the Band Council and Elders concerning the appropriateness of recording such observations and conversations, as well as the inclusion of other possible pertinent areas for investigation that I may have omitted.

Each of the 88 participants in this study was provided with a participant information letter and a consent form to ensure free and informed consent. In the case of interviews with minors, parents/guardians were asked to read the information letter and then complete the consent form with their child/ward. If the participant or the parent/guardian so wished, the parent/guardian was welcome to be present at the time of the interview. Notably, it was at times culturally unacceptable to seek written consent. In such cases, a verbal explanation of the contents of the participant information letter was provided in either English or, with the help of an interpreter, Slavey. When appropriate, this process was recorded using an audio recording device. The potential participant's response of giving consent or declining participation was then recorded in detail in my field notes. If a participant wished to withdraw from the study, s/he was able to do so at any time and without consequence, and information based on interviews or observations would have been removed and destroyed by the researcher if requested to do so. Happily, this situation did not arise.

The risks associated with interviews usually revolve around the disclosure of personal or sensitive information, which may make some participants uncomfortable. In addition, there was the slight possibility that my carefully selected interpreter/translator might have divulged confidential personal information concerning a participant. If requested, referral to a counselor would have been provided. Again, this situation did not arise. Possible risks were to be minimized by attempting to have, as noted above, community members generate the questions used in the interviews, as well as the careful selection and training of an interpreter/translator.

Sensitivity is also required when conducting secondary analysis of data. After seeking and obtaining informed consent, secondary analysis was conducted on the correspondence between various organizations concerning attempts for the inclusion of a category of events for Dene women in future AWG. The main concern associated with this kind of use of data involves the linking of data with specific individuals, especially since the names of government officials and members of the AWGIC committee are a matter of public record. In an attempt to be as respectful and considerate of all involved, anonymity was offered and, if desired, granted to all participants. Upon returning from the field and during the transcription of my field notes and interviews, the actual names of those participants who wished to remain anonymous were removed from the transcripts and replaced with pseudonyms.

Drafts of papers in this dissertation were circulated to community members for comments and points of clarification. As Haring (1956) points out, participants in research projects "want to know the results and, unlike laboratory rats, they regard the findings with emotion" (p. 61). While I have done my utmost to incorporate community feedback into this research project, if there were points where I feel that recommended changes were inappropriate, I included a footnote that notes the suggestion and the theoretical point of departure.

Analysis

Each paper in my dissertation examines discourses,power relations, policies, and politics, particularly those implicated in the results of surfacing subjugated knowledges. In each paper I highlight discourses that affect the participants in my research. In the first paper, I pay more attention to the constraints of discourse in order to understand how what people say enables or limits them. This approach helps the researcher to understand how what people say enables or limits them in relation to their investment in a particular discourse. Foucault (1980) understands power as constraints on action that are both enabling and inhibiting (Fraser 1989; Shogan, 1999). Such a view allows for constraints to be seen as enabling, rather than just inhibiting. By way of example, Shogan examines the ways in which game rules serve to constrain athletes' actions:

> Game rules enable certain actions and limit other actions by placing constraints on what athletes are allowed to do. Some of these constraints prohibit certain actions while others prescribe actions. Together these

> constraints on athletes' actions, produce what counts as the skills in a sport. (1999:4)

The no holding rule in hockey, for example can be used to illustrate her point: while such a constraint might enable the defender to defend the goal, it inhibits the offensive player's ability to score a goal (Shogan, 1999). As a result, constraints prohibit certain forms of action while simultaneously making others possible.

In order to understand constraints on discourse, one must first grasp the discourses that are in operation. A form of textual analysis, discourse analysis is used to make evident the structure of discourse and discourse formations (Jary & Jary, 2000) and can be used to show "links between texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices" (Fairclough, 1995). As a result, discourse analysts need to be "continually putting what they read into quotation marks: 'Why was this said, and not that? Why these words, and where do the connotations of the words fit with different ways of talking about the world'" (Parker, 1992, p. 4)? Questions such as these serve as powerful tools in attempts to surface the power that is invested in discourse and is produced and maintained in discursive practices (Henriques et al., 1984.

While such questions are useful in elucidating the presence of certain discourses and the power relations in which they are implicated, the researcher still needs to decide which discourses will be examined, a process that can be eased through the use of computer-assisted data analysis. The organization and archiving of the texts generated from interviews and field notes were accomplished using coding techniques that allowed me to select, code, and compare segments of text. The rapid search, retrieval, and browsing capabilities found in Microsoft Word were useful when working with large bodies of text, such as those generated from interviews. I selected specific quotations and then assigned codes that could later be grouped. Rather than merely looking for prevalent, clear-cut themes and discarding information that did not support such themes, I instead considered observations that did not fit generalizations as invaluable (Fairclough, 1992; Stewart, 1998). To standardize the analysis of the face-to-face, telephone and electronic mail interviews conducted for this project, only verbal or written utterances were analyzed. Conversely, both visual and verbal information captured during participant observation were recorded in field notes and, thus, both underwent analysis.

Following coding, a more focused review of literature took place to theorize and analyze these discourses, their interdiscursivity (Foucault, 1972), the social practice of which the discourses are a part (Fairclough, 1992), and underlying constraints/power relations. Certainly, like all other women, Dene women's identities are constructed with and in particular discourses, discourses that are constrained in a variety of ways. However, Macdonell (1986) finds that "discourses differ with the kinds of institutions and social practices in which they take shape, and with the positions of those who speak and those whom they address" (p. 1). Similarly, Parker (1992) notes that different cultures will have different culturally available understandings of what constitutes a discourse and whom the discourse benefits. Once again, the benefits of conducting research *with* community members become clear. By working with community members I had an opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the discursive fields that inform the participants' subjectivities, which in turn led to a better understanding of the constraints of discourse.

While it was impossible to enter the field with complete knowledge of the discourses and the constraints of discourses that would emerge in interviews and observations, a few seemed particularly relevant. Throughout the past twenty years, funding for the Dene Games and its Inuit equivalent, the Northern Games, has switched back and forth between the Territorial Government's Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs (which includes the Sport, Recreation Division) and Culture and Communication. Impassioned arguments concerning the "rightful" place for the Northern and Dene Game emerged from both departments. It appears that the source of the disagreement stems from two different areas. The first seems to be Sport and Recreation's reluctance in the mid-1970s to fund a "cultural" activity. Over the next decade, however, retention of the Northern and Dene Games was implicated in an apparent power struggle between the Sport and Recreation Division and the Department of Culture and Communications. For example, in a memorandum dated June 16, 1986, the Deputy Minister of Culture and Communications, Rene Lamothe, wrote "I am fundamentally opposed to this idea [of returning the Dene Games to Recreation Division]....Inuit and Dene games are unique *cultural* expressions...To return the traditional games to [Sport and Recreation] would be a step back" (p.1; his emphasis). The above quotations draw upon two prevalent discourses: that Dene games represent *cultural activities* rather than *sporting events*, and that it is the *traditional* aspects of these events that link them to *culture*. It was anticipated that sport administrators and participants alike will draw on these discourses to explain the differences in participation that exist between Dene women and men.

If one were to use a Eurocanadian feminist framework, a prevalent discourse that might emerge could be that of patriarchy, a discourse constrains women in specific ways. Weedon (1987) asserts that feminists take as their starting point the patriarchal structure of society:

> The term 'patriarchal' refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations take many forms, from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live. Patriarchal power rests on the social meanings given to biological sexual difference. In patriarchal discourse the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to a norm which is male. (p. 2)

Indeed, discussions of the role of menstruation in differential sporting opportunities might draw on patriarchal discourses. Notably, however, attempts at understanding the subject positions Dene women occupy through the blind application of a Eurocanadian framework are problematic. As a result, my understanding of constraints of discourse was informed by the writings of female and male Indigenous North Americans (e.g. Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001a; Wilson, 2001b), and other non-Eurocanadian scholars (e.g., Naganast, 1997; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1993; Nkulueko, 1987; Smith, 1999). Nevertheless, in a global society individuals do not live in vacuums. Instead, even those residing in remote Northern communities engage with media representations and texts that inform their understanding(s) of their worlds. Thus, the analysis found in this research project also engages with pertinent writings from Eurocanadian feminists in a cautious manner.

In order to highlight the ways in which my text was constructed, as examples of the discourses and constraints identified, I included quotations and portions of dialogue from the interviews that I conducted in this dissertation. Nevertheless, I did so heeding Cole's (1991) contention that

> [a]ctual dialogue in the text can be useful because it demonstrates the ongoing negotiation between cultural realities; but, actual dialogue is not literal dialogue because any textual representation entails decision making: which dialogues are included and privileged, how dialogue is framed, and which dialogues are suppressed and excluded are necessary mechanisms of construction. (p. 44)

Certainly, Cole raises a valid and interesting point concerning the production of text. Nevertheless, out of concern for constraints of space and interest, the inclusion of all dialogue and observations is impossible.

Foregrounding the Stories

In his text, *The truth about stories*, Thomas King (2003) writes,

> There is a story I know. It's about the earth and how it floats in space on the back of a turtle. I've heard this story many times, and each time someone tells the story, it changes. Sometimes the change is simply in the voice of the storyteller. Sometimes the change is in the details. Sometimes in the order of events. Other times it's the dialogue or the response of the audience. But in all the tellings of all the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle's back. And the turtle never swims away. (p. 1)

There are similarities between King's text and my own. As this work has been written in the "stand alone paper format," rather than in the traditional dissertation format, there will necessarily be some overlap between the chapters. However, while similar background information on Dene games is needed for each chapter, the chapters use the same information to tell slightly different stories – yet the stories of Dene games do not change; the turtle never swims away.

Dissertation papers

For my dissertation, I have chosen to use the "publishable papers" method. That is, each paper should be read as standing alone. While the papers are not meant to build on each other, as they might in the typical thesis format, they are related in that they all take up issues concerning Dene Games and issues concerning women's participation in these games.

In Paper 1, "A Foucaultian approach to menstrual practices in the Dehcho, Northwest Territories, Canada," I explore the benefits of using a Foucaultian approach to understandings of power, subjugated knowledge, discipline, and constraints in examining research questions related to Dene women, menstrual traditions, and physical practices in the Dehcho region of the NWT. While it is clear that Indigenous research frameworks have been marginalized in past research projects, I argue that the current approach of using almost exclusively Indigenous frameworks when conducting research with Indigenous communities has several drawbacks, and relies on some troubling assumptions, such as notions of Pan-Indianism. Examples gleaned from archival research, semi- and unstructured interviews, and participant observation are used to illustrate the benefits of a Foucaultian approach, and how such an approach can complement Indigenous research frameworks and agendas. In particular, I argue that by taking up a Foucaultian approach to constraints scholars can heed calls to address colonialism in research. Such an approach allows researchers to acknowledge the multi-faceted power relations that exist in research relationships and in communities. Furthermore, this approach allows researchers to take local knowledge seriously, rather than viewing it as information that requires transformation through post-positivistic, scientific discourse to allow for the emergence of truth (Chakrabarty, 2000). Thus, through the application of a Foucaultian approach, menstrual traditions and their impact on some women's participation in some physical practices in the Dehcho can be understood in a new light.

In the second paper, "Kevlar, Crisco, and menstruation: "Tradition" and Dene games," I examine Dene games through the 'invention of tradition' literature. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm (2002) notes that traditions which often seem to be old are often new or invented. He uses the term "invented tradition" to refer to "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (p. 1). Furthermore, he notes that invented traditions are "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations" (p. 2). By analysing notions of 'tradition' and also the multiplicity of ways that traditions concerning Dene games are looked at by residents of Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake and Dene Games organizers in the NWT, this paper demonstrates and reaffirms that, as Keesing (1989) points out, "the past…is contested ground" (p. 24), as are the traditions that are resurrected and invented along with it.

"Beyond "add women and stir": Feminisms, development, and Dene games" is the third paper in my dissertation. This paper examines the intersections between colonialism in the NWT, feminisms, sport development, and Dene games. After a brief overview of the history of colonialism in the NWT, I turn my attention to the role of colonialism in sport in the NWT, paying particular attention to the Arctic Winter Games, the Northern Games, and then the Dene Games. Following a review of feminist development approaches known as Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD), I argue for the need for sport organizations and administrators to take up the challenges that a postmodern GAD perspective puts forth. These challenges include: an interrogation of power relations between men and women, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and the Government of the NWT and the Denendeh Traditional Games Association; the destabilization of dominant discourses; an examination of the different levels at which sport development initiatives can be targeted; and the different ways in which sport development can be imagined.

In the fourth paper, "The acculturation matrix and the politics of difference: Women and Dene Games" I use Berry's (2001) acculturation framework and Young's (1992) notions of a politics of difference to argue for the need for a less suffocating notion of a sporting community and, in turn, suggest a move towards sporting cosmopolitanism.

Berry (2001) posits four different intercultural strategies used by ethnocultural groups: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. While I provide examples of how each of these four strategies can be found within sport in the NWT, integration, which Berry (2001) identifies as the most favourable strategy for acculturation, seems to be in short supply. Kalin and Berry (1995) have identified four pre-existing conditions necessary for integration: "the widespread acceptance of the value to society of cultural diversity…; relatively low levels of prejudice…; positive mutual attitudes among ethnocultural groups…; and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all individuals and groups" (Berry, 2001, p. 5). Despite the multicultural rhetoric that pervades race discourse in Canada, these conditions remain a utopia, with the AWG and the sport and recreation system in the NWT being no exception. Non-sporting communities, too, seem to struggle with integration. Thus, rather than privileging the notion of community, Young (1992) instead calls for a politics of difference, which she believes "lays down institutional and ideological means for recognizing and affirming differently identifying groups in two basic senses: giving political representation to group interests and celebrating the distinctive cultures and characteristics of different groups" (p. 319). In combining the strengths of Berry's (2001) acculturation strategies and Young's (1992) politics of difference, I suggest ways in which we might go about cultivating a politics of difference and cosmopolitanism for sport in Canada.

In the final paper, "Letting stories loose in the world," I attempt to say things that the previous four papers do not. Inspired by Thomas King's (2003) observation that "[t]he truth about stories is that that's all we are" (p. 32), I tell some of the more difficult stories that resulted from my research. In taking what is the radical step in academia of admitting to being less than perfect, I also adopt a more radical approach to my writing. Using textboxes filled with thoughts and fieldnotes, I interrupt, subvert, and add to the main text. In doing so, I comment on the ethics of Northern research, with a particular focus on the Aurora Research Institute's research licensure process, the notion of community and how it can operate in research in Aboriginal "communities," the difficulties I encountered gaining permission to conduct research for the AWG Territorial Trials, and finally the ethics of bi-directional agreements between researchers and Northern communities. In the end, this chapter, much like this entire dissertation, is a compilation of stories. They are stories that are about other people. They are stories about myself. The stories about other people are stories about myself. The stories about myself are about other people. They are difficult stories to tell.

I end this dissertation with "A conclusion of sorts." In concluding my dissertation, I offer an outline – an executive summary/cocktail party response – of my research findings. I also discuss my hopes for readers of this work and how they might engage with notions of authenticity and tradition as a result of reading this text. Finally, I write about my own understanding of the research that I conducted, and how I struggle in presenting any sort of definitive version of a work that will always be in progress as other readers and I learn new things and find ourselves embedded within new and ever-changing contingencies.

Endnotes

[1] I use the term physical practices as encompassing sport, recreation, physical activity, and active living. I do so because terms such as sport, recreation, physical activity, and active living are culturally and historically confined.

[2] Denendeh refers to the area that is the homeland of the Dene.

[3] This section is adapted from a paper that I wrote on Sport Nunavut's Gender Equity Policy that appeared in *Canadian Woman Studies Journal.*

[4] Interestingly, the confession also appears to be a part of Dene culture. According to Abel (1993), "In some areas, the shaman also acted as a confessor to whom people could admit breaking a taboo in hopes that they would be spared illness or other retaliation. Since disease was believed to be caused by the malevolence of spirits, it followed that if one attempted to appease the spirit, the disease might be cured" (pp. 41-42).

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A Foucaultian Approach to Menstrual Practices in the Dehcho Region, Northwest Territories, Canada

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Introduction

This paper explores the benefits of using a Foucaultian approach to examine research questions related to Dene women, menstrual traditions, and physical practices in the Dehcho (Mackenzie) region of the Northwest Territories (NWT). While it is clear that Indigenous research frameworks have been marginalized in past research projects, I argue that the current approach of using almost exclusively Indigenous frameworks when conducting research with Indigenous communities has several drawbacks, and relies on some troubling assumptions. Examples gleaned from data gathered through archival research, semi- and unstructured interviews, and 13 months of participant observation in three communities in the Dehcho region - Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e[1], Jean Marie River (JMR)/Tthedzehk'edeli, and Fort Simpson/Liidlii Kue – are used to illustrate the benefits of a Foucaultian approach to understandings of power, subjugated knowledge, disciplinary practices, and constraints, and how such an approach can complement Indigenous research frameworks and agendas. In particular, I argue that by examining constraints as being both inhibiting and enabling (Fraser 1989; Shogan, 1999) scholars can heed calls to address colonialism in research; such an approach allows researchers to acknowledge the multi-faceted power relations that exist in research relationships and in communities. Furthermore, this approach allows researchers to take local knowledge seriously, rather than viewing it as information that requires transformation through post-positivistic, scientific discourse to allow for the emergence of truth (Chakrabarty, 2000). Thus, through the application of a Foucaultian approach, menstrual traditions and their impact on some women's participation in some physical practices in the Dehcho region can be understood in a new, more informed light.

Placing the Communities and their Residents

Aboriginal peoples, particularly those who reside in remote northern communities, are often displaced from non-Indigenous Canadians' imaginations. As a result, it is not surprising that very few people can locate Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e, JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli, and Fort Simpson/Liidlii Kue on a map. The fact that the communities of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e and Jean Marie River/Tthedzehk'edeli are so tiny that they do not appear on many maps likely does not help the situation.

Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e can be found nestled in the southwest corner of the NWT, just above the upper reaches of British Columbia's border [see Figures 1 & 2]. In the summer months, this community of sixty-five residents is accessible only by air, while a winter road helps to break-up the isolation during the colder months. Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e bills itself as being one of the most traditional communities in the NWT. For example, in the *Deh Cho Visitors Guide*, Chief Dennis Deneron is quoted as saying, "We're strongly active with our traditional activities" (Northern News Service, 2002:24); traditions involving menstruation are no exception.

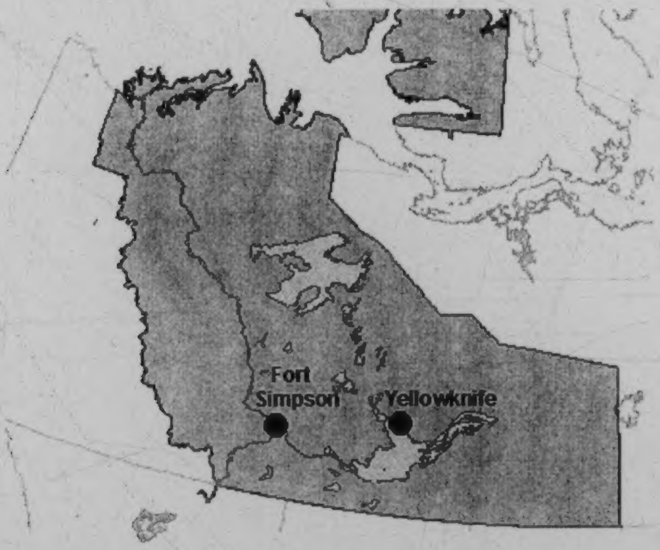

Figure 1: Canada's Northwest Territories (ESRIDATA Canada. Environmental Systems Research Institute Canada Ltd, 2003).

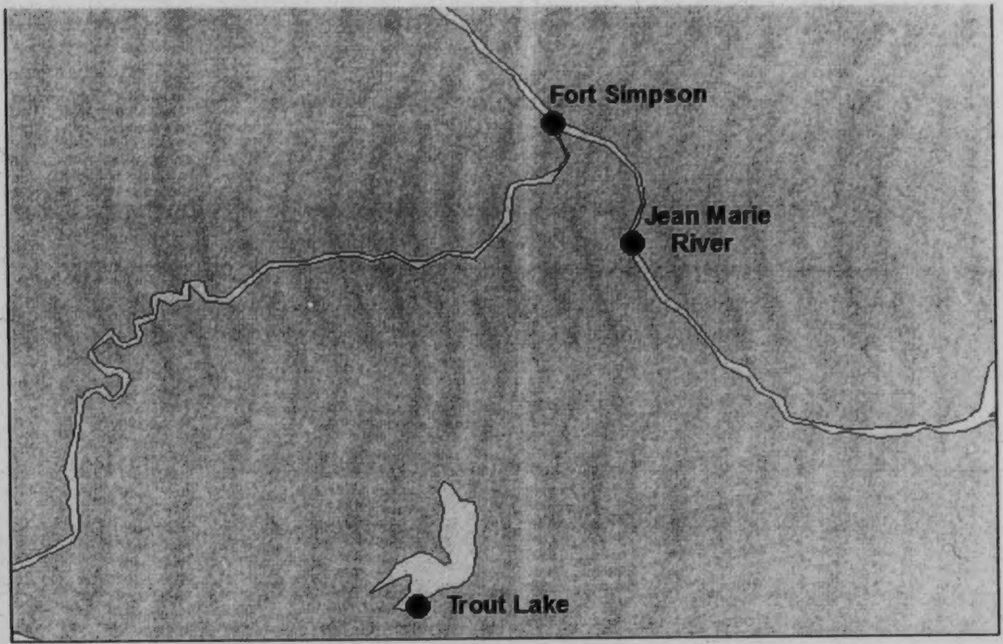

Figure 2: Communities in which research took place (ESRIDATA Canada. Environmental Systems Research Institute Canada Ltd, 2003).

To the northeast of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e, on the bank of the Mackenzie River, lays the community of JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli. With 52 residents, JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli is one of the smallest communities in the NWT. Though tiny in size, JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli looms large within anthropological literature, but under the pseudonym June Helm (2000) used in her research over fifty years ago: Lynx Point. The "Lynx Point people" and Helm's study of them, including their menstrual practices, feature prominently in many texts about Dene peoples (e.g., Abel, 1993; Abel, 1998; Coates & Powell, 1989; Goulet, 1998; Morrison, 1998).

Fort Simpson/Liidlii Kue, a community of 1,200 people which is located at the confluence of the Mackenzie and Liard Rivers, is an historic gathering and trading place for Aboriginal peoples in the Dehcho region, and later gained prominence for Eurocanadian traders when it became a post for the North West Company and later the Hudson's Bay Company. The North West Company built Fort of the Forks soon after 1800 (Morrison, 1998). "The Forks" was renamed Fort Simpson when the North West Company was absorbed by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 (Abel, 1993). Currently, the community serves as the regional center for the Dehcho and houses, among other things, a high school that has boarders from neighboring communities in which high school is not offered, a sizable health center, and offices for various branches of local and regional Aboriginal governments, as well as Federal and Territorial governments.

Indigenous residents of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e, JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli, and Fort Simpson/Liidlii Kue are Dene – specifically, Slavey - and Metis peoples. According to Abel, the Slavey are "found along the Mackenzie between Great Slave Lake and Fort Norman [now known as Tulita], along the Liard River to Fort Nelson, and through northern British Columbia and Alberta to Hay River" (1993:xvii). Familial and political ties between all three communities are strong; many community members are related, and the Bands in all of these communities are members of the Dehcho First Nations.

Why Not an Indigenous Framework?

When conducting research with Aboriginal communities, one must be cognizant of the legacy of colonialism, a part of which includes a history of exploitive research conducted by typically non-Aboriginal scholars. As a result of this legacy, many Aboriginal communities are hesitant to have non-Indigenous, non-community members conduct research with their communities. As Smith, states "[f]rom the vantage point of the colonized…the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (1999:1). Consequently, demands for decolonized research and research that engages with Indigenous frameworks[2] have become more frequent, and researchers using such frameworks have become more vocal (Smith, 1999; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2001a; Wilson 2001b).

While the recognition of Indigenous research frameworks is certainly welcomed and desperately needed, with their emergence has come an expectation that researchers working with Indigenous communities will use almost exclusively Indigenous frameworks when conducting research. Importantly, however, calls for the exclusive use of Indigenous frameworks in research with Indigenous communities overlook several pressing issues: what constitutes an Indigenous framework and who is able to use it, and what are the shortcomings of scholars' use of *exclusively* Indigenous frameworks when conducting research with Indigenous communities?

Calls for the use of Indigenous research frameworks have been made in reaction to Euro-centric frameworks that have been found to marginalize or be incompatible with Indigenous worldviews and practices. Nevertheless, different scholars have divergent views on Indigenous research frameworks. Wilson, for example, finds that Indigenous "ontology, epistemology, axiology and are methodology are fundamentally different" (2002b:176) from those developed by Euro-North American scholars. While this acknowledgement of difference is helpful, Wilson's definition leaves open to debate whether or not non-Indigenous peoples can learn to use Indigenous research methodologies. Weber-Pillwax, however, is clearer on the matter: "Indigenous research methodologies are those that enable and permit *Indigenous researchers* to be who they are while engaged actively as participants in research processes that create new knowledge and transform who they are and where they are" (2001:168; emphasis added). Thus, while a Eurocanadian might want to use Indigenous frameworks, attempts at such usage could quite justifiably result in concerns surrounding the cooptation of Indigenous frameworks by a non-Indigenous scholar. Thus, a Catch-22 of sorts exists: a non-Indigenous researcher can encounter criticism from (in my experience, primarily non-Aboriginal) researchers for failing to use Indigneous research designs, while other scholars can level criticism against non-Indigenous researchers for doing just that.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the idea of Indigenous research frameworks refers to a Pan-Indianism that is created at the cost of failing to recognize important differences between Indigenous peoples. For instance, if one were to use a research framework developed by a Maori individual rather than Foucault for research in Canada's north, some scholars might be appeased. However, what are the politics of applying a Maori-derived framework to, for example, the research that is conducted with the Dene in Canada's sub-arctic? Hence, the unproblematised application of Indigenous research frameworks to all research projects involving Indigenous communities has some drawbacks. Thus, I believe that other research paradigms can be used (especially by non-Indigenous researchers) in sensitive, responsive, and responsible ways to make valuable contributions to research conducted with Indigenous communities; further, I believe a Foucaultian approach to research is able to do just that.

Why Foucault?

Foucault's understanding of power, subjugated knowledge, disciplinary practices, and constraints offers innovative and useful ways of theorizing research conducted with Indigenous communities. In this section, I outline these concepts and examine the ways in which they contribute ethnographic research.

Conducting research with any community, particularly those that have been victimized by colonialism, involves a careful, thoughtful approach towards power relations implicated in the research process. Foucault's understanding of power provides scholars with a useful framework through which researchers can interrogate such power relations. According to Foucault, "power establishes a network through which it freely circulates, this is true only up to a certain point… But I do not believe that one should conclude from that that power is the best distributed thing in the world" (1980:99). Indeed, many characteristics of ethnographic inquiry display the unevenness of power's distribution. Much has been written about the imbalances between the researcher and the researched. As a result, many researchers now interrogate their own position(s) and role(s) in the production of knowledge, and, critically, the position(s) and role(s) of community members.

Shore finds that "an element of reflexivity has become almost de rigueur in most ethnographic writing" (1999:28). By engaging in reflexivity authors acknowledge, or attempt to acknowledge, that their work is produced through the built-in filter of their positionalities and past experiences. As a Euro-Canadian, Toronto-born, middle class, feminist, vegetarian, graduate student, who travels with her pet guinea pig, many individuals would likely construe me as being an "outsider" to the Dehcho. However, following Wray, I take issue with the representation of the researcher as either an insider or an outsider. As she notes,

> [i]n reality the location of the researcher within the field is mediated through a multiplicity of shifting perspectives, identities and biographies that are variously (re)constructed through interaction. This makes it likely that a researcher will inhabit outsider, and insider space simultaneously. (2002:128)

Indeed, I, like Wray, found that my identities and status positions shifted continuously throughout my thirteen months of fieldwork, especially as I became increasingly aware of new and different kinds of knowledge, and shared experiences with community members.

Discussions of ethnographic researchers in Indigenous communities often involve a subtext that researchers hold a disproportionate amount of power relative to the residents of the communities with which she or he is conducting research. However, as discussed above, power circulates and, as such, communities members exercise - often unacknowledged - power. As a researcher, my positionality and status were under constant negotiation. I was acutely aware of the fragile nature of my position - that I could be dismissed from the community at any time. Other researchers, too, have reported similar experiences. For example, Goulet (1998) was informed of the precarious position he was in while in conversation with a Dene Tha community member in Assumption/Chateh, Alberta. Goulet was told:

> I tell you everything. We teach you, we say everything to you…If you don't say the right words, and we don't like it, you are in trouble…Like

> you write what we tell you, we could walk away, we go away, what do you do? Nothing, you can't write anymore. (1998:187-188)

This moment proved illuminating for Goulet who writes,

> I suddenly understood that I was not saying the right words, that my questions were rude and insensitive. Their patience was running short. I could easily alienate them, in which case they would leave and I would have nothing to write. (1998:188)

Goulet's (1998) experiences illustrate the power that community members exercise in research projects. Indeed, as Foucault (1978) notes, resistance is an exercise of power. As a result of reports of experiences such as Goulet's, calls for community-based participatory research (cf. Fletcher, 2003), and the acknowledgement of the power that community members exercise, I felt that the first crucial point of negotiation for my research was my entry into the communities. Prior to my arrival in all of the three communities, I obtained a NWT research license, which entails a large amount of community consultation and includes obtaining permission from the community's Chief and Band Council, and I underwent my university's ethics review process. In each of my three fieldwork locations, I spent the first month and a half getting to know community members. This involved volunteering at local schools, facilitating community gardens, preparing food for community functions, and organizing or taking part in many recreational activities[3]. During this time, I also spoke with community members about their interests in and past experiences of sport and recreation in the community. I also asked them to advise me as to what questions should be asked during the semi-structured and unstructured interviews that my research assistants-translators and I would later conduct. In doing so, I attempted to remove myself from the position of "expert," and also gained valuable community input into the research itself. Indeed, as Kirby and McKenna (1989) state, "the research participant is not a passive participant, simply there to talk about her or his experience. The participant may know of better or clearer questions to ask…[or] of gaps in the interview plan" (1989:68).

By applying Foucault's understanding of the way in which power circulates and is exercised to the research that I was conducting with the residents of the three communities, I was better able to involve community members in all aspects of the research project. And, as a result, we were able to develop a study that was better able to reflect community members' own concerns and questions. For instance, community members wanted to ensure that the knowledge was brought back to the communities in which the research was conducted. By preparing community-specific resources (e.g., photo albums, compilations of oral histories in audio and text formats) and presenting these resources and my research findings to community members, I was able to address these concerns and build upon the relationships that I developed within the communities. Wilson (2001b) and Weber-Pillwax (2001) both speak to the need for research with Aboriginal communities to be relational in manner. Indeed, by acknowledging and honoring the power that community members exercise, the importance of an idea of relationality is displayed. As such, the way in which community members and I approached the research project provides a compelling example of how a Foucaultian approach to power can be used to meet the needs of both researchers and community members alike. Furthermore, this approach displays the points of articulation between

Indigenous frameworks a Foucaultian approach, as both call for attention to relationships and their power dynamics.

Another way in which a Foucaultian approach can make important contributions to research with Aboriginal communities concerns issues of knowledge. One of the effects of the legacy of colonialism is the weight that colonial discourses carry; Cairns (1988) argues that Eurocanadian discourses are often privileged over those stemming from Aboriginal people and practices. One of the ways through which research can disrupt colonialist, mainstream discourses is through the surfacing of subjugated knowledges, which Foucault describes as "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (1980:82). In the following passage, Foucault elucidates the enormous potential for this sort of knowledge:

> it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges..., which involve what I would call a popular knowledge (*le savoir des gens*) though it is far from being a general commonsense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, *local*, *regional knowledge*, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it…it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work. (1980:82; emphasis added)

By surfacing subjugated knowledge about Dene women's participation in physical practices in the Dehcho, as well as the role that menstrual traditions play in such participation, we are able to challenge sweeping statements (often referred to as metanarratives) concerning physical practices that dismiss local Indigenous knowledge, especially as they pertain to women, while also contributing to knowledge within Indigenous communities. Such knowledge is then able to be used to critique and challenge colonial, Euro-North American based discourses concerning women's involvement in physical practices. Nevertheless, the surfacing of such disqualified knowledge is not without power relations of its own, as it involves decisions concerning which data are included and privileged, and which data are suppressed and excluded (Cole, 1991) on both sides of the dialogue. Again, the power exercised by community members in all aspects of the research process and its importance is clear – without buy-in and input from community members, the surfacing of subjugated knowledge becomes impossible[4]. As I have elucidated the potential benefits of a Foucaultian approach towards power within Indigenous communities, I now turn to the use of Foucault's approach to disciplinary practices and constraints.

Menstrual Traditions as Feminine Disciplinary Practices

While many of Foucault's musings about discipline are strongly tied to aspects of French, and more generally European, history, the application of his understanding of discipline to Dene women and menstrual traditions is revealing. According to Foucault, "discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies" (1977:138). It is important to note that Foucault's use of the term docility does not imply passivity. Rather, docile bodies are skilled, disciplined bodies produced by particular configurations of time, space and movement, and thus able to exercise power within particular discourses.

In her examination of feminized disciplinary practices, Bartky describes three categories of such practices that are necessary to produce conventionally feminine docile bodies:

> those that aim to produce a body of a certain size and general configuration; those that bring forth from this body a specific repertoire of gestures, postures, and movements; and those directed toward the display of this body as an ornamented surface. (1990:65)

As we shall see below, practices developed for the management of menstruation can be viewed as falling into the second category.

Discourses of pollution and/or power are prevalent in many ethnographic accounts of menstruation. Buckley and Gottlieb (1988) find that most ethnographic reports of menstrual practices and beliefs view menstrual blood as "symbolically dangerous and otherwise defiling" (p. 4). Buckley and Gottlieb further find that these "analyses have great predictability, for again and again they center on the concepts of *taboo* (supernaturally sanctioned law) and *pollution* (symbolic contamination)" (p. 4; authors' emphasis). While notions of pollution and taboo have been used as the primary explanations for menstrual practices, other authors explain menstrual practices in terms of power. For instance, Anderson (2000) asserts that Aboriginal women's segregation during menstruation is based not on impurity, but instead on the enhanced power that women have during this time. Along similar lines, Irwin notes that many North American Indigenous societies have viewed menstrual blood as having a detrimental impact on men's hunting ability, as "menstrual blood is not thought of as polluting but as clashing with a man's power(s)" (1994:177).

Several authors (Abel, 1993; Giles, 2004; Goulet, 1998; Helm, 2000) have documented menstrual practices among Slavey peoples, some of which continue to be practiced today in communities. For example, Goulet reports that in Assumption/Chateh, Alberta,

> menstrual sequestration was a regular feature of a Dene woman's life. At this time women camped away from the community, never in the company of males, in case men should become incapable of hunting or performing other male tasks. Contemporary Dene women are similarly expected to be mindful when menstruating so as not to endanger the well-being of males. (1998:94)

By way of example, Goulet relates a story of a Chateh man who became sick due to his teenage daughters walking around the house while menstruating. A local healer identified the kitchen as a particularly problematic area for such behavior. "Following the healer's diagnosis and healing ritual, the parents set up a table of their own in the dining room and the young girls were admonished for lacking respect towards others" (1998:97). After addressing the healer's assessment of the situation, the man's health improved.

Similarly, Giles found that while most, if not all, women in Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e used to remain sequestered while menstruating, today, "[i]nstead of remaining segregated, most female residents of Samaa K'e now avoid going anywhere that they do not have to go; refrain from eating fish, birds, and berries; and do no go boating while 'on their time'" (2004:26). Residents of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e believe that this behavior is an important way of women showing respect towards fellow community members as well as maintaining health-related practices.

Helm's fieldwork in JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli from 1951-1952 led her to the conclusion that "[c]ertain beliefs and practices [in JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli] have a common underlying theme, the danger of blood and the concomitant need to handle it carefully" (2000:276). Helm found that during menstruation taboos required women to sit in one corner of their house and abstain from all activities, including household chores. If these practices were not followed it would "bring tuberculosis to her husband and the children and (apparently the more common explanation) would bring bad luck to her husband in his trapping, snaring, and hunting" (2000:276-277). During my own fieldwork in JMR/Tthedzehk'edeli, several community members shared with me that, though menstrual practices are not continued to any great extent in the community contemporary times, as Helm found, they did take place in the past. In fact, menstrual traditions in the Dehcho were even recorded by Samuel Hearne, who explored the arctic in the 1700s. Hearne noted:

> It is also a piece of policy with the women, upon any difference with their husbands, to make that an excuse for a temporary separation…This custom is so generally prevalent among the women, that I have frequently known some of the sulky dames leave their husbands and tent for four or five days at a time, and repeat the farce twice or thrice a month, while the poor men have never suspected the deceit, or if they have, delicacy on

> their part has not permitted them to enquire into the matter. (Hearne cited in Abel, 1993:22)

In the above example, we can see that menstrual practices can be used as a way for women to exercise power within their relationships with men – it is not simply a matter of men controlling women, as some liberal feminists might assume. Furthermore, the men respect and acknowledge this power by not "enquir[ing] into the matter."

Menstruation has also played a prominent role within Eurocanadian-derived discourses about women and appropriate activities for women. In the early 1900s, menstruation and women's reproductive organs were viewed as incapacities. Indeed, according to Lenskyj, menstruation "reinforced the existing power relations between men and women: women experienced this monthly 'incapacity,' men did not" (1986:25). Women's "god-given responsibilities for child-bearing and mothering" (Kidd, 1996:120) were privileged over engagement in sport and recreation, with some gynecologists threatening that "'violent exercise,' especially during menstruation, caused [uterine] displacement" and could "exacerbate[e] existing uterine problems" (Lenskyj, 1986:27). Though by the middle of the 20th century doctors were prescribing physical activity as a way of relieving symptoms of menstruation (Lenskyj, 1986), and though attitudes towards female reproductive capabilities and the impact of exercise have changed, Eurocanadian women still tend to view menstruation as a 'problem' that needs to be dealt with, often in a secretive manner.

Menstruation as a Constraint

Foucault (1980) understands power as constraints on action that are both enabling and inhibiting (Fraser 1989; Shogan, 1999). Such a view allows for constraints to be seen as productive, rather than just oppressive. By way of example, Shogan examines the ways in which game rules serve to constrain athletes' actions:

> Game rules enable certain actions and limit other actions by placing constraints on what athletes are allowed to do. Some of these constraints prohibit certain actions while others prescribe actions. Together these constraints on athletes' actions, produce what counts as the skills in a sport. (1999:4)

The no holding rule in hockey, for example can be used to illustrate her point: while such a constraint might enable the defender to defend the goal, it inhibits the offensive player's ability to score a goal (Shogan, 1999). As a result, constraints prohibit certain forms of action while simultaneously making others possible.

By taking a Foucaultian approach, menstruation, too, can be viewed as a constraint, that is, both enabling and inhibiting. Thus, rather than viewing past and current menstrual disciplinary practices as resulting in exclusively inhibitory effects, we must also question the ways in which these disciplinary practices, and the power relations implicated in such practices, are productive of enabling discourses about Dene women.

Below, I explore how the Foucaultain approach that I have outlined above can be used to examine Dene menstrual traditions as they apply to swimming in Trout Lake and hand games. In particular, I pay attention to power, subjugated knowledge, discipline, and constraints, and how the application of Foucaultian understandings of these terms can be useful in addressing colonialism in research.

Swimming in Trout Lake

If you examine a map carefully, you will notice that Trout Lake, the lake on which the community by the same name is found, is shaped like a person lying on his or her side in the fetal position [see Figure 2]. This impression in the ground is said to have been made by the giant most often referred to as "Yamoria." For many people, the association with the giant is what makes the lake sacred. Indeed, community members have a deep respect for the lake. According to Dennis Deneron,

> The legend about the lake here, you have to pay respect to the lake and then it will respect you. Give a piece of clothing or tobacco or that, it'll be good to you…I remember my grandma told me a story about the lake, she said that there are water people who live in the lake. A long time ago, before outboard motors came along, you see just globs of fish fat that float right up on shore, and then when it's a nice calm day you can hear drum dances underneath the lake, [water] dogs are howling. (Personal communication, July 18, 2002)

Another important tradition concerning Trout Lake involves women refraining from swimming in it. SarahAnn Jumbo recalls,

> [When I was young] me and my sisters, we really wanted to go swimming, but whenever we wanted to go swimming, go to the water, my mom used to chase me down from the beach and scare us back to the camp with spruce boughs because girls weren't allowed to go in the water because it was a place where the giant slept, and we weren't allowed. My brothers were allowed to go swimming, and we girls really wanted to go

> swimming, but mom always told us not to. (Personal communication, July 20, 2002)

Similarly, Elder Julie Punch remembers,

> The only time we went out in the water was when it was wavy to get some water for drinking, just go down from the knee, that's the only time we could go in the water…When we were growing up [women] weren't allowed to go in the water. When we went in the water, we'd always get in trouble with some Elders telling us not to go in the water because…there's fish in the water and water's for drinking and there's fish…and the fish is old. It's an old lake. (Personal communication, July 8, 2002)

Various reasons for women refraining from swimming came to light during the semi- and unstructured interviews I conducted with 21 of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e's 65 community members. These reasons included: hurting fishes' spirits; a negative influence on the female swimmer's reproductive abilities, particularly the birthing process; that if boys and girls or men and women swam together, it would have a negative impact on the man's hunting ability; and that, according to one member of the younger generation, "they said that a long time ago older girls shouldn't go swimming in the water because there's something in the water or something [often reported as being a big beaver or monster].. And girls were swimming in the water and that's why there's something in the water that came back" (Anonymous, personal communication, July 16, 2002).

While no exact dates could be obtained, it appears that swimming instructors from the Territorial aquatics program have been coming to Trout Lake-Sambaa K'e for the last decade or so. As a former employee of the NWT Above Ground Pool Program in Cape Dorset, Nunavut (formerly NWT) and Fort Simpson, NWT, prior to arriving in the community, I had volunteered to run a waterfront program for community members. Thus, when the ice came off of the lake in late June and it was time to start planning swimming lessons, I found myself in an interesting position. Many parents were quite excited at the prospect of a swimming instructor being in the community all summer, as they hoped that their children could learn water and boat safety, and thus perhaps increase their chances for survival should an unfortunate situation occur on the water. The children, too, seemed very excited. However, by agreeing to facilitate the waterfront program and thus make some community members happy, I was also concerned with what the less enthusiastic community members would think about me, a woman, running the program (which would involve me being in the water), as well as the prospect of the local children participating in the program.

I asked several Elders how they felt about girls swimming in the lake and me teaching swimming lessons. Elder Julie Punch said,

> I really don't have much to say about that, because in the past the Elders were very strict. Now, the younger people are growing up, they're turning away from the story that was being kept. They're more into the white man's world today and they can just go into the water whenever they want. The most important thing is with the waterfront program, teaching them the safety with swimming and about the water, so it's important to do that. (Personal communication, July 8, 2002)

Conversely, her husband, Joe Punch, said "Swimming, that's against the Dene law [for girls], you know" (Personal communication, July 17, 2002).

Some members of the younger generation expressed frustration with traditions concerning women and swimming. One young woman, who asked not to be identified, reported the following recollection from her youth:

> Men, like, they'd go swimming every day if they wanted to. But women, they're not supposed to go swimming too often…I think it's because women get their monthly cycle every month and stuff like that, eh. You need time to get it all settled or whatever before you can go back in the water and stuff like that because everybody drinks the water and they get fish from the water too. I thought that that was pretty unfair because sometimes it would get really, really hot. And that time too we didn't have showers and bathtubs like we do now, we used to live in log houses…we had no bathtubs, no running water, nothing. So in the hot weather, it gets really hot and no trees around, no shade, nothing, we had to stick it out in the hot weather and [boys] can go live in the lake (laugh). It wasn't very fair, I think. (Personal communication, July 11, 2002)

According to SarahAnn Jumbo, women's use of the lake has changed in recent years: "Now the girls they just go in the water whenever they want, when it gets hot, and when the lake is calm they just go in the water whenever they want" (Personal communication, July 20, 2002). This statement, however, appears to only be true to a point. All of the women I spoke with said that they would not swim while menstruating;

they reported that they continued to follow the practice of not swimming (or even boating) while menstruating.

In the end, after consultations with the Band office, swimming lessons did take place – in some cases, with boys and girls in the same class - though some community members did not enroll their children in the lessons. While there was some occasional joking about my role as a swimming instructor, the general feedback was positive.

By examining the above selections from the interviews that I conducted, we can see how menstrual traditions can be viewed as constraints in a Foucaultian sense. Certainly, menstrual practices create and reinforce discourses that inhibit many of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e's female residents from participating in aquatic-based activities. However, these practices also produce what can be considered to be enabling discourses and discursive practices. By exercising non-participation in swimming, the community's women have kept the legend of the lake alive, and they have produced discourses of tradition and power pertaining to the lake, as well as of women and their responsibility for community health. While Joe Punch's comment that girls swimming in the lake is against the "Dene law" might seem to be feed into strictly inhibitory discourses, it, like his wife's comment, speaks to women's power and the important role that women have and exercise by refraining from swimming in the lake. Thus, rather than operating in a way that produces solely *inhibitory* discourses concerning women, their bodies, and their physical practices, oral traditions concerning women maintaining disciplinary practices (e.g., refraining from swimming in the lake) also result in productive *enabling* discourses of women's power and the important role women play in the maintenance of community health.

Hand Games

Hand games, also known as stick gambling, have a rich history in Denendeh[5], and oral histories of past hand games participation continue to exist. Hand games involve a moosehide drum, which many Dene people view as sacred. Most residents of the three communities that I interviewed reported that, in the past, women did not play the drum or hand games, and that women's participation in either activity could potentially harm men's hunting abilities[6]. Fort Simpson/Liidlii Kue Elder William Antoine reports that "[o]nce in a while Elderly ladies would go in [to the hand games], but the younger ladies don't…The Elders told the younger girls, ladies, not to join in. The grandparents and the parents [would] get mad at them and the Elders won't let them" (personal communication, March 20, 2004). Another resident of Fort Simpson-Liidlii Kue explained that "[i]t's just the younger ladies' mothers are still teaching them stuff and they don't want to distract their attention to something else. It has something to do with the monthlies, too, because in the old days women tended to keep to themselves" (Anonymous, personal communication, March 20, 2004). A female resident of Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e reported, "before, like, a long time ago women weren't allowed to play it, to play handgames or to play the drum or stuff like that" (Anonymous, July 11, 2002). Similarly, Yvonne Jumbo shared with me, "my grandma told me that, that the drum is [sacred]. But back then they relied on their medicine people, so they used the drum for some sort of praying, for healing, so she said [women] are not supposed to play the drum" (Personal communication, July 10, 2002). By way of a final example, another young woman in Trout Lake/Sambaa K'e reported that she played hand games when she was a child, but "as I got older I started reading the rule books of the Dene games, and most of them, there's only men playing, no women are supposed to play. It's because of women's time of the month and stuff" (Anonymous, July 16, 2002). Indeed, most residents reported that menstruation indicated a time of special power (either enhanced power or more potentially dangerous power) and, as a result, precautions about activities during this time need to be taken.

Though almost all of the individuals I interviewed reported that women did not participate in hand games in "the old days," which is a finding that supports other research (e.g., Heine, 1999), interestingly, the most detailed oral traditions about hand games that were relayed to me pertained to instances in which women did in fact play. Dolphus Jumbo of Trout Lake told me the following story:

> [By winning hand games] one tribe took everything from another tribe – blankets, guns, everything. So the men lost. The men said 'you can't take everything. That's our livelihood, we live on it.' Blankets and everything. So one of the women stood up and said 'let us give it a try.' So they did. They won the whole thing back on top of what the others have – guns, axe, knives, everything. And then one of them, when they're losing everything, one of the Elders said, 'let's stop here, we need that stuff.' But the women said, 'you took everything from our men, so we have to take everything.' Eventually that's what they did. (Personal communication, Aug. 7, 2002)

Suza Tetso, a resident of Fort Simpson, related another oral tradition of women's involvement in hand games:

This one gathering, women were getting food and watching the kids and the men were gone…they'd be playing hand games, it went on for days and things needed to be done that didn't get done. Everyone had a role and were needed, so the women were starting to get really upset. 'This has gone on too long,' they said. The women said okay...stopped what they were doing, got together, went to where the men were playing hand games. They went over there and stopped in there and said, 'stop this game! You're needed over here. You need to go hunting, check the nets, do all these things. Dogs need to be fed. You have a lot of responsibility, you men have to take responsibility. Stop the game now, let's get back to life.' And they [the men] didn't want to stop. So the women were really upset, so they said 'we'll challenge you. We'll take you on. If we win, you stop and everyone goes back to what they need to do and don't play this game again, not for a long time, because you have responsibilities.' So the men just laughed at the women. 'Ha-ha, you can't beat us!' And the women were really angry and said, 'no we'll challenge you right now.' [The men said] 'no, we don't want to play, we're playing this game here, we don't want to play with the women.' So what happened was that the women challenged them and they said no, and the women said 'because you are afraid to lose to the women because we're good at what we do and you know it, that's why you're afraid to challenge us.' And the men just laughed and they had no choice…So the women challenged them and the women said, move, we're going to take over this game. They got in there.

> You can imagine what these women are like, they're traditionally dressed and some of them had handkerchiefs and stuff like that and they were playing. And my grandfather's telling my mother this story, saying all these women they started playing hand games...leaning over like this…and you're singing. And my grandfather's telling my mother this saying they…were right into the game and their breasts were just bouncing up and down and they didn't care, they were just getting into it! They were playing and playing and they beat the men at their own game. The game stopped right there and then they all went back to their work. And the only reason they didn't want the women to play is that there's nobody else to do the jobs at the camp. They didn't have anybody else to do it. If the women and the men did it, nobody's going to raise the children or feed the dogs, so they left all the work to the women and the women said no. Because it's an equal system that keeps the balance of the family where everyone does their part, even the little kids. (Personal communication, Feb. 12, 2004)

While neither of these oral traditions explicitly state the reasons why women were not involved in hand games in the past, the fact that the stories of women's involvement in hand games are remembered as exceptions to typical instances of hand games speaks to the fact that, in the past, women[7] played such games infrequently. Interestingly, though, Tsetso notes,

> I don't know where this idea came from, but people [have] started saying women don't play hand games, they don't play drums and that. My great

> grandmother played the drum, you know? My grandfather encouraged my mother to keep going with that, that was something that was a gift from the Creator that comes in a vision or a dream and it's not for someone else to say 'you can't do that.' (Personal communication, Feb. 12, 2004)

Tsetso believes that women drummed in the past, but stopped due to men's desire to protect the women from missionaries, rather than men's desire to protect themselves from women:

> People started talking, saying that they were burning women in Europe in other countries, wherever these people came from, they said they were burning women for practicing traditional medicines and healing and stuff…[A]nd the men didn't want nothing to happen to the women, so they protected the women by saying 'you don't do this in public. You hide it, it's something that you do traditional medicines or songs or drumming, you have to do it in private, don't do it around these people [missionaries].' So the men picked up the drums, the men were the ones that were drumming. The women, if they did it, they had to hide some place…So that's how the men started playing the drums and the women didn't play in public anymore, because they didn't want the women to get burned. They thought they were going to burn them alive here. And they might have, who knows? But at the time, um, they pushed the women back not because they weren't good enough to play the drum, but because they were the sole teachers of our tribes, our clans, our lives. And without

> the women they couldn't survive. (Personal communication, Feb. 12, 2004)

In these interview segments, much like those relating to swimming in Trout Lake, we see that women's activities are curtailed due to inhibitory discourses surrounding activities and the ways in which women, and particularly women following disciplinary practices concerning menstruation, should participate. Thus, it would be relatively easy to overlook the ways in which some residents of the Dehcho view menstrual practices as being productive of enabling discourses that acknowledge women's power and its importance to community health and balance, and instead focus on what some might view as sexism or discriminatory behavior. In doing so, however, much of the understanding of the richness of women's power and place in society becomes marginalized.

Re-thinking Power

I will confess that as an atheist feminist, my initial reaction to hearing local stories and histories concerning monsters in Trout Lake and of menstruating women causing irreparable harm to men should they participate in hand games was to use post-positivistic, Western liberal feminism to transform such information into a secular story, one that did not rely upon "invisible powers." In writing histories of physical practices in the communities in which I conduct research, I initially felt that I had to explain away the "supernatural" in order to be taken seriously within academic discourses. Chakrabarty points out that "[a] secular subject like history faces certain problems in handling practices in which gods, spirits, or the supernatural have agency in the world" (2000:72). I was quite happy to rationalize away the impact of power derived from menstruation; my Eurocanadian, secular upbringing and education had taught me to ignore such forms of power or to view them as something only used by the ignorant, those who did not have access to the answers science can provide. Indeed, the academic world in which I inhabit is largely disenchanted and calendrical (Chakrabarty, 2000), viewing history as something that happens along a timeline that is shared throughout the world. As Chakrabarty notes, the timeless qualities of spirits and mysterious powers are forced out of the post-positivistic world of academia in order to generate sameness throughout the world. By forcing spirits and powers into a universal language and explaining them away, one is able to view these local manifestations as individual examples of a universal phenomenon (i.e., ignorance of science). As a result, sameness is created, which gives us access to a universal language, one that, through translation, erases difference and perpetuates the idea of a single, universal world history. By transforming information from the spiritual world through secular, scientific language (e.g., Western liberal feminist discourse), the goal is to develop one consistent story, the one that is the "Truth."

In terms of my own research, the transformation of interview material through post-positivistic, Western liberal feminism might look something like this: *Local residents claim that there is a monster in the water that appears when women, especially menstruating women, enter the water. Also, local residents say that women should not play hand games and should stay home when they are menstruating to avoid harming the community members' health. These stories are clearly thinly veiled attempts to maintain patriarchal control over women and their bodies.* Through this transformation of the stories that I was told, the participants in the research study would have become the confessors (Foucault, 1990), I would have become the interpreter, and the tale that I wove would have become represented as "what really happened" or "the truth." This story, in all likelihood, would have supported existing research on the subordination of women in physical practices, which privileged discourses view as regulated through patriarchy. Local knowledge would have been subjugated, and colonial power relations that victimize Indigenous communities would have been re-inscribed.

Notably, a Foucaultian approach does not engage in such post-positivistic transformations. By choosing not to force stories of Dene power through Eurocanadian-based, secular, scientific discourse, and by instead embracing a Foucaultian approach, constraints concerning menstruation become visible as being both enabling and inhibiting, and criticism that is rooted in local knowledge is able to do its work. The circulation of power, and its exercise and employment through a net-like organization (Foucault, 1980), is recognized, as are the ways in which individuals are always "simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are also the elements of its articulation" (1980:98).

Conclusions

Without asking Dene women why they do not figure prominently in the cultural landscape of some forms of physical practices, it is easy to come to the conclusion that they are absent because they are oppressed as a result of menstrual practices. While some Dene women argue that that is indeed the case, others point to the fact that it is their power, which is enhanced during menstruation, and not their disempowerment that results in their abstinence in participating in certain activities. In fact, rather than displaying their oppression, by deciding not to participate in hand games and aquatic activities, Dene women might actually be displaying their agency and autonomy and proliferating enabling, rather than or in addition to inhibiting, discourses concerning Dene women, their bodies, and power. If the typical Western liberal feminist goal of "equality" and "empowerment" were to be expressed in attempts to have women participate in aquatic activities in Trout Lake and hand games, it is paradoxical that such empowerment might come about only by failing to acknowledge the power that some Dene people associate with menstruation.

While a Foucaultian approach does not provide a panacea to the politics of research, it does offer some exciting opportunities for Indigenous community-based research. Indeed, such an approach can be viewed as a useful framework for understanding the complex ways in which power operates within communities, between community members, and certainly between community members and researchers. Furthermore, this approach allows the re-emergence of subjugated knowledges, which most certainly contribute to Indigenous knowledge projects that have as their focus the disruption of mainstream discourses that largely ignore or attempt to (re)colonize Indigenous peoples and their practices.

Endnotes

[1] Throughout this paper, I refer to the communities with which I did my research by both their English and Slavey names. As the names and identities of the communities represent different things to different residents, I use both out of respect for all residents.

[2] I use the term framework to encompass epistemologies, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, methods, and analysis.

[3] I participated in these activities to assist the community it meeting its self-defined needs. In research relationships, there is always an element of give and take. While community members were interested in my research, they were also – and sometimes more – interested in the other skills that I brought to the community (e.g., the ability to operate a rototiller). Thus, I was not engaged in these activities solely for the purpose of "gaining access." Rather, these activities were contributions that were asked of me and expected of me.

[4] It is important to note that the surfacing of subjugated knowledge may not benefit all community members. Furthermore, some community members (e.g., those who did not want to participate in the research project) might not want subjugated knowledge to be surfaced. Nevertheless, this research project received approval from the Band Chief and Council, Metis Organization, and municipalities in each of the communities in which it took place. As such, I feel that that spoke to at least some community members' support of the surfacing of subjugated knowledge about Dene women's menstrual practices.

[5] Denendeh is the name of the area in which Dene people live.

[6] Hunting abilities remain an important part of Dene life, as many community members, particularly in Trout Lake-Sambaa K'e and JMR-Tthedzehk'edeli, continue to live off of the land.

[8] Neither Dolphus Jumbo nor Suza Tsetso stated whether the women who participated in these hand games were menstruating, not menstruating, or postmenopausal.

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Kevlar®, Crisco®, & Menstruation: "Tradition" and Dene Games

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> Aboriginal peoples are no more prisoners of the past than other Canadians are…Aboriginal peoples, like other contemporary people, are constantly reworking their institutions to cope with new circumstances and demands. In doing so, they freely borrow and adapt cultural traits that they find useful and appealing. (Government of Canada: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996)

> [We] got a good word no one ever argues with, Indyun or not, makes everything right and okay. We say – TRA-DISH-UNN. Heh, heh, heh. Wanna make white people believe what you tell 'em? Say it's TRA-DISH-UNN…You gotta do it, we say, it's TRA-DISH-UNN. Good word that. Makes life easy. ("Keeper" in *Keeper 'N Me*, Wagamese 1994, p. 2)

Sambaa K'e (or Trout Lake), Northwest Territories (NWT), exists as a small dot on some maps, while on others it is entirely absent. This community of 65 Dene people, which is accessible only by air in the summer months, is a place where log houses stand beside prefabricated homes. Although it is a community that still closely identifies itself with "the traditional way of life," it is also a community where the Elders lament the fact that they can no longer speak with some of their grandchildren without the aid of an interpreter, where snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles long ago replaced dog teams, and where Eurocanadian sport is far more prevalent than traditional Dene games. However, this is not to say that Dene games are entirely absent. Nor is it to say that all the residents of Sambaa K'e feel the same way about the history, the traditional value, and the current state of Dene games. Using data collected from four months of ethnographic research that was conducted during the summer of 2002, this paper examines the complexity inherent in anthropological investigations of "tradition," and also the multiplicity of ways that "traditions" are looked at by residents of Sambaa K'e and Dene Games organizers in the NWT. By exploring different interpretations of traditional Dene Games, the role of women in such games, and the ideological positions that have contributed to these interpretations, the ways in which certain understandings of tradition are privileged over others are elucidated.

Methodology and Methods

In her aptly titled article "Invisible but not absent," Paraschak (1995) finds that "[a]cademics, along with the public in general, know very little about the experiences of Aboriginal girls and women in physical activity" (p. 71). Similarly, Gravelle (1985) identifies a dearth of information about Aboriginal women's involvement in traditional games. Paraschak (1996) points out that "our knowledge of sport is really a knowledge of white, male, elite or professional athletes, involved in mainstream, modern 'sport' activities. We know little of other races, of women athletes, [and] of non-mainstream sports…who equally compose the sport world" (p. 111). Indeed, it seems that the only easily obtained fact one can find in the literature concerning Aboriginal women's involvement in sport and games is that it is a contentious issue, with historical investigations netting interesting, and sometimes conflicting, results. Because sport and games are inherently social practices, they can best be understood by analyzing how they are produced in and through social interactions. As a result, a constructionist approach must be taken to better understand Aboriginal women's involvement in sport.

According to Crotty (1998), constructionism is the view that "*all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and the world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context*" (p. 42; his emphasis). Kirby and McKenna (1989) note that "[c]onstructing explanations of the world is a human activity. And yet, knowledge production has been organized in a way that excludes many people from ever participating as either producers or subjects of knowledge" (p. 95). Kirby and McKenna further note that "the research participant is not a passive participant, simply there to talk about her or his experience. The participant may know of better or clearer questions to ask…[or] of gaps in the interview plan" (p. 68). The implication, thus, is that by conducting interviews with residents of Sambaa K'e and by inviting them to reflect upon their own social context, meaningful symbols, and their ensuing behaviour, a new richness in understanding tradition and re-presentation(s) of tradition will emerge. As a result, semi-structured interviews were used to maximize the participants' expertise, as well as that of my research assistant, Phoebe Punch.[1]

Participants were located using snowball sampling, a form of purposeful sampling. Cresswell (1998) finds that snowball sampling "[i]dentifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich" (p. 119). In total, 20 of the 65 residents of Sambaa K'e were interviewed.[2] Sixteen women were interviewed: 6 of them were 18-30 years of age, 5 were 30-60 years of age, and 5 were over 60 years of age. Of the 4 men interviewed, 2 were 30-60 years of age, and 2 were 60 years of age or older.[3] Semi-structured interview questions were developed with the help of community members so that the research project was culturally acceptable and was able to fit community members' needs. The semi-structured interviews focussed on individuals' past and current experiences in recreation, with an emphasis on gender based participation in traditional games (e.g., stick pull, snowsnake, pole push, hand games and axe throw). Questions included but were not limited to: Do you remember playing any games when you were growing up? When you were growing up, did women play traditional games? Why or why not? Were there games that only women or only men played when you were growing up? How do you feel about the way traditional games are played today? If you were to make the rules about traditional games, would you let men and women play together? Why or why not?

Undoubtedly, there are those who would argue that my privileged position as a middle class, Eurocanadian graduate student calls into question my ability to conduct research *on* Aboriginal women that is of any significant use, value or merit. For example, Nkululeko (1987) asks, "[c]an an oppressed nation or segment of it…rely on knowledge produced, researched and theorized by others, no matter how progressive, who are members of the oppressor nation" (p. 88)? Of greatest significance is the fact that research was not conducted *on* the community members of Sambaa K'e, but rather "*by, for*, and *with* them" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 28; authors' emphasis). Before entering the community, permission from the Chief and Band Council and a NWT research licence were obtained and university ethics requirements were satisfied. Once in the community, Elders were consulted and their permission, and even their encouragement, was given for this research project. All participants gave informed consent and were free to remove their contributions to the project at any time.

The History and Development of Dene Games

Sambaa K'e bills itself as one of the most traditional communities in the NWT. In the *Deh Cho Visitors Guide* Chief Dennis Deneron is quoted as saying, "We're strongly active with our traditional activities" (Northern News Service, 2002, p. 24). For some residents of Sambaa K'e, Dene games represented an important part of their traditional upbringing. Heine's (1999) research, along with oral traditions, has established that Dene games have enjoyed a long history in Denendeh.[3] He has found that Dene games were heavily influenced by the connection between travel and life on the land. Strength, endurance, speed, and accuracy were necessary for travelling and hunting on the land and were often practiced by playing traditional games. While Dene games were typically played while travelling on the land, these games were also featured, and continue to be featured, prominently in multi-community gatherings.

The first Dene Games took place in Rae-Edzo in 1977. This multi-community sporting and cultural festival was organized by the Dene-U Celebration Committee with the help of a grant from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Recreation Division (Paraschak, 1983). The first Dene Games revolved around a softball tournament which drew participants from communities close to Rae-Edzo. The Games remained in this format until 1979; after that the Games did not occur for two years. In 1980, the Dene Games Association, which was comprised of the same people who sat on the Dene-U Celebration Committee, held an organizational meeting that was funded by the GNWT. The result of this meeting was the 1981 Dene Games were held in Rae-Edzo and, once again, focused on a softball tournament, but also included several traditional games (Paraschak, 1983). The Dene Games became established as an annual multi-community sport festival that rotated between communities. Events typically included: axe throw, bannock making, bow and arrow shoot, coin toss, canoe races, Dene baseball, dryfish making, fish filleting and frying, log splitting, spear throw, tea boiling, and tug-of-war. In 1999, the funding of the Dene Games changed and communities were instead encouraged to use available funding from the GNWT to develop Dene Games within each community by holding Dene Games workshops rather than intercommunity competitions. This change was not only a cost saving measure, but also an attempt to increase skill development. In 2002, however, the Dene Games were once again held as an intercommunity event in Fort Resolution, largely as a result of the efforts of the Mackenzie Recreation Association, an organization composed of community-based Recreation Directors that views the Games as an important regional event. Thus, Dene Games have been constructed over time and organized in different ways in order to meet the desires and financial constraints of various groups.

Dene games are played not only in regional festivals but also at the Arctic Winter Games (AWG), a multi-sport competition and cultural festival for the circumpolar region. Though the AWG began in 1970, the Dene Games component was not added until 1990, at which time Dene Games had developed to the extent that the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) felt that they could be included. After regional consultations, the traditional games that were selected as Dene Games events at the AWG differ from the events at regional Dene Games: finger pull, stick pull, snowsnake, pole push, and hand games. Unlike the typically mixed-sex categories[4] at regional Dene Games, the AWG has only ever had categories for men. A category for Senior Men has been available since the inception of the Dene Games category; a category for Junior Men was added at the 2002 AWG to increase participation. In recent years, however, there has been a movement by a group of Dene Games enthusiasts from various locations in the NWT to create categories for women, a movement that has resulted in the addition of a Junior Women's category to the 2004 AWG in Northern Alberta. As Paraschak (1999) points out, "First Nations sport culture…reflect[s] ongoing shifts in gender relations between Native and non-Native communities, and within Native communities" (p. 164).

The addition of a Junior Women's category clearly aligns the AWGIC with the gender equity policies that all the Territorial Sport Federations (i.e., Sport North, Sport Yukon, and Sport Nunavut) and the GNWT have adopted, as well as with groups that have lobbied for women's involvement in the Dene Games portion of the AWG. According to AWGIC member Ian Legaree, the idea of a Junior Women's category in the Dene Games

> has been raised a number of times in recent years. A primary factor for the AWGIC though is support from [the main administrators of] at least three jurisdictions. Before the 2003 selection process there simply did not seem to be enough interest…[F]or the 2004 selection process…the NWT, Yukon and Alaska all strongly supported the inclusion. (personal communication, May 16, 2003)

The addition of a Junior Women's category in all of the Dene Games played by men at the AWG, however, can also be juxtaposed with the efforts of a recently formed group called the Denendeh Traditional Games Association (DTGA). This group, which is made up of men - many of whom are involved in sport and recreation – would like to become the Territorial Sport Organization for Dene Games. The DTGA has asserted that women did not traditionally play hand games and thus should not play hand games now. They have also prohibited women from participating in DTGA sponsored hand games tournaments (Kay, 2002). Here we find a division, a fracture line in how Dene people feel about the tradition of Dene games.

Inventing Tradition

In *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm (2002) notes that traditions which often seem to be old are often new or invented. He uses the term "invented tradition" to refer to "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (p. 1). Furthermore, he notes that invented traditions are "responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations" (p. 2). In light of the theoretical challenges to tradition posited by anthropologists, the changes in traditional Dene Games warrant investigation through the 'invention of tradition' literature.

Trevor-Roper's (1983) work on the invention of the Highland tradition of Scotland and Handler and Linnekin's (1984) examination of Sapir's (1924) categorization of tradition as "genuine" or "spurious" make the case that many practices that are considered to be traditional are often deliberately constructed to serve particular ideological ends. Trevor-Roper outlines the invention of three aspects of Highland culture: the Scots-Gaelic poet called Ossian, the kilt, and clan tartans. Using Sapir's terminology, Ossian, the kilt, and clan tartans are all examples of spurious traditions that were invented to meet certain economic goals and to aid in Scottish attempts for emancipation from English rule. Handler and Linnekin, however, take issue with the binary genuine/spurious - or perhaps more appropriately, the Manichaean divide - that has been used to categorize tradition:

> Traditions are neither genuine nor spurious, for if genuine tradition refers to the pristine and immutable heritage of the past, then all genuine traditions are spurious…[If] tradition is always defined in the present, then

> all spurious traditions are genuine. Genuine and spurious – terms that have been used to distinguish objective reality from hocus-pocus – are inappropriate when applied to social phenomena, which never exist apart from our interpretation of them. (p. 288)

Wagner (1975) and Borofsky (1990) have also investigated the invention of tradition. The work of both of these authors can be used to support Handler and Linnekin's (1984) assertion that traditions can never "exist apart from our interpretation of them" (p. 288). Wagner claims that anthropologists can only make sense of another culture and its traditions by understanding them in terms of the anthropologist's own culture. Through exposure to another culture, the anthropologist begins to see how her/his own culture has been invented, and is subsequently able to use that understanding to contrast the foreign culture with her/his own. This understanding, however, changes over time; thus so too must the way in which the fieldworker writes about her or his experiences. The result is the invention of not one, but two cultures, both of which are dependent on the fieldworker's understanding and experiences, and are necessarily malleable and fluid. Similarly, Borofsky's (1990) work on Pukapuka shows that people's understanding of tradition varies; indeed, even though community members might appear to agree upon the form and content of a tradition, "the resulting consensus may be a false one. Underneath the surface, people may still disagree" (p. 116). By unravelling the ways in which "different people construct different versions of the atoll's past" (p. 2), Borofsky is able to display the fluidity of Pukapukan understandings of tradition while also displaying, and subsequently undermining, conventional anthropological understandings of traditions as fixed entities.

Borofsky's (1990), Handler and Linnekin's (1984), and Wagner's (1975) detailed accounts of culture and tradition all speak not only to the ways in which traditions are fluid, but also to the ways in which a fieldworker's experiences and positionality play key roles in the culture and traditions that the anthropologist re-presents or, using Hobsbawm's (2002) terminology, invents. In terms of my own work, I have struggled and continue to struggle to expand the middle class, Eurocanadian notions of gender equity that have had large influences on my own life. Indeed, the ways in which I am able to re-present women's involvement in Dene games cannot be divorced from who I am, as well as the ever-changing filters through which I view the world. As Gardner (1999) writes, "each anthropologist's relationship with her or his experience is continually changing, just as we continually change as individuals" (p. 53). Just as anthropologists change the way in which they view the world and the events that go on around them, so, too, do non-researchers, in this case, residents of Sambaa K'e. It would be much easier to write about traditions as monolithic, static entities, but the reality of the situation demands a much more rigorous and often controversial inquiry. Whereas there exists some disagreement with regard to the way in which tradition is invented, there exists no shortage of agreement on the point that "the past…is contested ground" (Keesing,1989, p. 24), as are the traditions that are resurrected and invented along with it.

Though small in population, the residents of Sambaa K'e have a large number of differing opinions concerning what constitutes traditional cultural practices in sport and recreation and how they should or should not be changed. Dolphus Jumbo[6] shared the following memories of his childhood participation in axe throw and finger pull:

> axe throwing's the most common one. We'd do a lot of that. We don't have so many axes, only so much axe in a family, but it happens that every time we go through this competition we'd break an axe handle, and we'd really, really get scolded from our parents for doing that. But it's a fun game.
>
> Author: Growing up, did you ever play finger pull?...
>
> Yup, yup! We did part of that, but we were only allowed to do so much…because you can pull your muscles or your tendons…Dad used to say you pull these out and your joints go back and forth and your knuckles are going to get big. (personal communication, Aug. 7, 2002)

When the same Elder was asked if girls were allowed to play such games with the boys, he responded, "No, they really weren't…no they weren't really allowed to do axe throwing and that…most of the boys, if they played it was always boys playing together, sometimes girls, but just rarely. It's sort of like boys were separate from the girls…That's the way it was and that's the way it is." Elder Julie Punch also has few memories of women playing games:

> I never really tried to play in that kind of games. We never had time to sit back. We were always keeping ourselves busy with moose hide, and moose meat, and the camp… Working on moose hide, we never had time to [play games], just the men who really didn't have much to do in the camp, they'd just go out and compete in the axe throwing. Back in the day, they had hand games. It was strictly for the men and the ladies just

> sit back and watched…In the past, only the men were allowed [to play]. (personal communication, July 11, 2002)

Handler and Linnekin (1984) have pointed out one of the main reasons why the past and re-presentations of traditions are contested: "one of the major paradoxes of the ideology of tradition is that attempts at cultural preservation [by both researchers and non-researchers] inevitably alter, reconstruct, or invent the traditions that they are intended to fix" (p. 288). Such is clearly the case with Dene games. Elders in Sambaa K'e remember community-based Dene games as being significantly different in both form and content from those that are currently used at regional and international events. Whereas many of the changes that have occurred result from efforts to standardize events for inter-community competitions, some changes have also occurred due to modernization (e.g., the invention of new materials and substances, as will be illustrated below) and/or what Chief Dennis Deneron of Sambaa K'e viewed as a circumspect selection of events. Chief Deneron commented on the inclusion of bow and arrow shoot and talent show events in a recent regional Dene Games:

> When you look at bow and arrow shoot, they use fibreglass bows. They should be a homemade bow and homemade arrows, but they're using fibreglass and aluminium shafts and everything…They [also] had to get some points in jigging and singing. I don't think my great ancestors got up and strummed a guitar and got points for that! (personal communication, July 18, 2002)

Along similar lines, the stick used in the game stick pull is now typically greased with Crisco® rather than fat directly off an animal, and in canoe races at Dene Games, competitors paddle Kevlar® canoes, rather than those made of natural substances, at regional and community-based Dene Games. Handler and Linnekin (1984) note that when "those elements of the past selected to represent traditional culture are placed in contexts utterly different from their prior, unmarked settings,…juxtaposed to other objects, enmeshed in new relationships of meaning, they become something new" (p. 280). Their approach differs from that of anthropologist Sahlins's (1981), whose understanding of tradition is exemplified by the "structure of the conjuncture" (p. 35), whereby changes are incorporated into a pre-existing, old tradition. Instead, Handler and Linnekin believe that "all cultures change ceaselessly" (p. 273) and that traditions are invented to serve the needs of changing contemporary cultures. Hence, Handler and Linnekin view traditions as new entities rather than entities formed and based in the past. Writing and thinking about traditions as new and constantly changing entities thus become challenging tasks for both researchers and sport enthusiasts alike.

Menstrual Traditions, Traditionalists, "Discontents," and Those In Between

Riphenberg (1997) has identified the major tension that exists with culture change:

> Culture is not static but is constantly changing: it is dynamic, perpetually adjusting to fit the current needs of the people. Moreover, culture does not exist independent of material factors but develops in response to a particular social and material environment. When this environment changes, culture, too, must adapt. The problem is that people do not agree on exactly how it should be adapted. (p. 45-6)

Similarly, Shils (1971) found that people do not always accept traditional beliefs and can reject resurrected traditions. Indeed, he theorizes that people reject tradition for a number of reasons, the most common being the "unfittingness of the traditional belief to newly acquired beliefs and practices" (p. 142). Rutz (1987) labels people who reject tradition on this and similar grounds as "discontents" (p. 534), a group which can be contrasted with "traditionalists," those people who wish to maintain the form of old traditions, contrived though they may be. Both traditionalists and discontents can be found even in a community as tiny as Sambaa K'e.

One of the largest areas of concern for community members as well as members of the DTGA involving changes in Dene games concerns women's participation in such games, particularly hand games (Kay, 2002)[7] that involve a drum. According to all interviewees, women rarely, if ever, participated in hand games in the "old days." In fact, for several decades leading up to the 1990s, hand games were rarely played by either men or women in Sambaa K'e (D. Deneron, personal communication, July 18, 2002). Participation began to increase in the 1990s, however, when the community invited Dene drummers from Assumption, Alberta into the community to help revive drumming, a practice that "was almost lost" (D. Deneron, personal communication, July 18, 2002) in Sambaa K'e. During their visit, the Assumption drummers also encouraged hand game participation from not only men, but also women.

Though rarely discussed in an overt manner, all of the participants under 60 years of age and all of the male Elders interviewed reported that the underlying reason why women do not typically participate in many traditional games, especially hand games, revolves around menstrual traditions and notions of purity and power. Participants who were female Elders spoke more subtly about women's enhanced power and the need for community members to respect each other.

Whereas the role of menstrual traditions has diminished considerably in recent years, they continue to play a large role in life in Sambaa K'e. Today only a few women continue to follow the tradition of remaining in the home, separated from men, when menstruating (Anonymous, personal communication, July 12, 2002). The implementation of a wage economy and of Eurocanadian forms of education resulted in women being at financial and educational disadvantage by following menstrual traditions (Anonymous, personal communication, July 2, 2002). Instead of remaining segregated, most female residents of Sambaa K'e now avoid going anywhere that they do not have to go, refrain from eating fish, birds, and berries, and do not go boating while "on their time" (Anonymous, personal communication, August 11, 2002). Though all of the women interviewed had, at some point in their lives, heard that women should not play hand games, all but one of the women interviewed who were 40 years of age or younger had played anyway. All of those who had played said that participating in hand games was much the same as drum dancing and fire feeding and that one should not participate while menstruating.

One woman explained, "they say women can easily overpower men if they're not careful. I don't know, [the DTGA is banning women] just to keep the men safe, I guess" (Anonymous, personal communication, July 16, 2002). Other women explained that if a man were to come in contact with a menstruating woman, it would have a negative impact on his hunting ability. Indeed, menstrual traditions are still very much a part of life in Sambaa K'e and traditions surrounding blood are also applied to childbirth, after which women in Sambaa K'e confine themselves to their homes for a month. One woman remembers a visitor to the community who failed to follow this custom and how people "freaked out" as a result (Anonymous, personal communication, July 2, 2002).

In Sambaa K'e there is a group of community members which is predominantly, though not exclusively, made up of Elders who believe that women should not participate in hand games. Said one middle aged woman, "Hand games and drum dance…it's strictly for the men… It has something to do with spiritual legends and… it's always said…that it was for the men. So I think they should just keep the women out of it" (Anonymous, personal communication, July 6, 2002). Others take a more moderate stance. For example, when asked whether women should participate in the Dene Games component of the AWG, four of the women who did not support banning women came up with another solution, one that appears to draw on the separate but equal line of reasoning. They believed that women should be allowed to play, but that they should only play against other women, a division which Elder Emily Jumbo supports:

> Separating them…that's how it's done in the past. That's how I've seen it done…If the women are going to compete [in traditional games], they usually separate, women gather in one section and compete against each other, and the men gather in a different section and compete against each other. That's how it's been done in the past. (personal communication, July 11, 2002)

While having separate teams would appear to appease those who feel women should be allowed to play hand games, the issue of participation in traditional games during menstruation, especially hand games, which we will remember involves a drum, proved to be a somewhat more perplexing situation. Indeed, even with exclusively female teams, concerns about menstruation and power continued to surface. Conversations about this issue led to intriguing discussions with varying degrees of "discontented" individuals.

Three of the women in Sambaa K'e suggested that substitutes would be appropriate for menstruating hand games team members, though one woman felt that substitutions would have certain drawbacks, especially as the implementation of substantial amounts of prize money and opportunities to travel to hand games tournaments make the prospect of participation more attractive. She said,

> If it were for money they [women] would have no choice, they would have to play, right? It all depends on how good the player is, too. Like if the player wasn't so good then maybe they'd have a back up [for a menstruating player] or whatever, a substitute, two, three substitutes, and that other person will take over, but it all depends on how good the person is too, because some people are really good, and some people are not. If the person's really good…if it's for big money, you won't substitute them [with] somebody who isn't as good. (Anonymous, personal communication, July 11, 2002)

Whereas there may not be "big money" involved in the AWG, the opportunity to travel and to participate in an event that draws competitors from several countries is indeed a valuable one. When asked for possibilities of how organizers at the AWG might deal with the issue of menstruating participants, one woman replied somewhat facetiously, "I guess they're going to have to have something like drug testing" (Anonymous, personal communication, June 10, 2002)!

Though something like drug testing is unlikely to win praise from female participants, the voices of the male and female residents of Sambaa K'e show that a solution that pleases everyone is unlikely to be found. As a group, Dene women occupy multiple subject positions and, individually, each woman has multiple subjectivities. As Weedon (1987) states, "the experience of individuals is far from homogeneous" (p. 79). Thus, while there are women who take the ideological position that part of adhering to tradition involves refraining from playing hand games, there are others who believe that, as long as they respect menstrual traditions, hand games can be an important way for them to preserve and enjoy their culture. As a result, a false binary is created when academic, sport policy, and DTGA representations of men and women, and even entire communities, either accept or reject tradition. The reality of the situation is far more complex, as some people do not fall neatly into one category or the other. One woman in her mid 20s, Norma Jumbo, gave voice to the conflicts that exist within her:

> I don't think it's fair. I don't think it's fair…I don't know how should I put it, but, I mean…I can't see why – why are they going to ban [hand games] for women?... They said it's to respect our elders. And us, we're still traditional. All of us here. Women, men, we're all still traditional, living in our traditional way of life. And so, half of me is right there, and then they're saying that Native women shouldn't join [hand games in] the Dene Games. It's like, I'm just like half and half. I'm in a spot where I can't agree with one of them. I agree with both. Half and half. One for the elders, for our elders, right? For our elders in the past. Through our ancestors, what they taught us, it's still with us. But what they're trying,

> what they're probably trying to do is…trying to bring all the traditional ways back to life again. (personal communication, July 3, 2002)

This young woman's statement leads to the question of whether there is an obligation to invent, or perhaps re-invent, *all* aspects of a tradition? For instance, why does the DTGA view the invention of neo-traditional aspects of Dene games (e.g., the use of Kevlar® and Crisco®) as unproblematic, but view women's participation in hand games as problematic? Keesing (1989) proposes that it need not matter whether traditions that are recreated are "real." He instead wonders if "perhaps it matters only whether such political ideologies are used for just causes, whether they are instruments of liberation or of oppression" (1989, p. 19). Notions of liberation and oppression, however, depend upon the discourses that are in operation at the time. For instance, Keesing finds that representations of Indigenous culture are often selected as "*counters to* or *commentaries on* the intrusive and dominant colonial culture" (p. 23; his emphasis) and that colonized people select and emphasize "the elements of their own traditions that most strikingly differentiate them from Europeans" (1989, p. 23). In response to Keesing's work (1989), Hawaiian academic Haunani-Kay Trask asserts that Native Hawaiians "do not need, nor do we want to be 'liberated' from our past because it is the source of our understanding the cosmos and of our *mana*" (1991, p. 164).

Notably, these "academic blood sports" (Sahlins, 1995, p. 9) parallel discussions (or, perhaps more appropriately, arguments) that are occurring with regard to women's participation in Dene games, particularly hand games. Some recreation professionals, such as members of the Mackenzie Recreation Association, and many female residents of Sambaa K'e, particularly the younger generation, view the recent formation of the DTGA and its lobby to prohibit women from participating in hand games competitions throughout the territory as a form of oppression. For example, when describing his attempt to have girls from his community attend the trials for Dene games at the AWG, Chief Stanley Sanguez of Jean Marie River, Northwest Territories was shocked to find that there was not at that time a category for women:

> I was kind of disappointed because the coordinator was saying 'no girls allowed.' And I said, 'what the hell? I mean, who makes these rules? It's the Arctic Winter Games…International Committee….I think the International Committee should be taken to court for discriminating [against] women at the AWG. (personal communication, May 24, 2002)

According to Kay (2002), the Denendeh Traditional Games Association "said it [is] important for people to understand they are forming a traditional association which will follow the ways the games were played in the past" (Kay, p. B19). All but one of the young women in Sambaa K'e, however, felt that failing to have women's categories, even for reasons of protecting/reasserting tradition, was discriminatory. One woman explained her feelings on the attempt to bring back traditional practices:

> Things [have] changed now, you know. Nobody lives solely by the traditional way of life anymore, so things change…[and] women should be allowed to play. Like back then there were certain reasons why women couldn't play certain things because it's like the way of life, the way people live, the traditional way of life. If women participated in certain things it brought bad luck or nobody got any good luck or anything like that. But now nobody lives like that anyway…so why bring [back]

> everything traditional when nobody lives like that now? (personal communication, July 11, 2002)

Along the same lines, another younger woman who currently enjoys playing hand games said concisely that banning women from these games "would kind of suck" (personal communication, July 16, 2002).

Dene women are not alone in dealing with issues involving menstruation and women's participation in sport and recreation. Indeed, the exclusion of menstruating women from physical activity is a part of Eurocanadian sport history, too. According to Millet (1970), since time immemorial patriarchy has had a "powerful hold through its successful habit of passing itself off as nature" (p. 58). Menstruation and its implications for women's sport participation resonate clearly with Millet's statement. Writing about menstruation in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Lenskyj (1986) asserts that menstruation

> needs to be understood in the wider context of women's reproductive health because menstruation was both a symbolic and a concrete reminder of fertility and femaleness. Moreover, its regular appearance reinforced the existing power relations between men and women: women experienced this monthly "incapacity," men did not. (p. 25)

Certainly, menstruation and women's reproductive organs in general, were viewed by those in the sport and medical communities as incapacities that effectively restricted women's involvement in sport, maintaining sport as a preserve of male dominance. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, doctors warned of the so-called "masculinizing" effects of some sports on women (Cahn, 1994). Some doctors argued that athletic training would interfere with menstruation and cause the hardening or atrophy of reproductive organs.

Lenskyj reports that "[b]y 1912, some gynecologists were claiming that 'violent exercise,' especially during menstruation, caused [uterine] displacement, and were blaming athletics for exacerbating existing uterine problems" (p. 27). Over time, however, strong beliefs in Victorian notions of femininity loosened and attitudes toward menstruation and participation in sport changed. Indeed, by the mid-1900s, physical activity was regarded as a way of relieving symptoms of menstruation (Lenskyj, 1986).

In some ways, Dene women's involvement in traditional games is analogous to the struggles experienced by Eurocanadian women; both Dene and Eurocanadian women have had menstruation and their reproductive capabilities constrain their recreation activities. In other ways, however, it is very different. Far from viewing menstrual traditions as oppressive, some Dene women view them as a manifestation of their power.

Two self-identified "traditional Dene women" who were interviewed echoed Trask's (1991) comment; like Hawaiians, Dene peoples do not need to be liberated from their traditions. Instead, these women view the maintenance of menstrual traditions as an important part of their lives as Dene women. Furthermore, by adding a Junior women's category to hand games at the AWG, is there not a chance that Dene women's power will be eroded or perceived to be eroded? For example, could women's inclusion in hand games signal the decline of power associated with menstruation and women? If the goal of adding women to the Dene Games at the Arctic Winter Games is in fact empowerment, it is indeed paradoxical that such empowerment might come at the expense of other forms of women's power (i.e., power associated with menstruation). Furthermore, traditionalists might feel that, as Indigenous peoples, they should not be forced into a Eurocanadian/colonial AWG framework that views differential treatment on the basis of gender as discrimination, a framework that would seek to create traditional Dene games that some might feel would not be traditional at all.

Rethinking Tradition, Recognizing Difference

Young (1992) aptly states that "in a racist, sexist, homophobic society that has despised and devalued certain groups, it is necessary and desirable for members of those [devalued] groups to adhere with one another and celebrate a common culture, heritage, and experience" (p.302). The DTGA's position on women's participation in Dene Games can be viewed as a manifestation of this desire for common culture, heritage, and experience – or, in other words, tradition. Young further acknowledges, however, that this adherence is achieved at a cost – the failure to recognize within group difference, such as some Dene women's desire to participate in Dene Games.

Postmodern theorists and critical ethnographers attempt to disrupt homogenous, static renderings of identity, instead preferring to view identity as fluid and fragmented. As a result, rather than being viewed as problematic, contradictions, inconsistencies, and disruptions are viewed as opportunities for enhanced understanding (Cole, 1991). Such thinking has had a strong impact on anthropological theory and anthropologists alike. Nagengast (1997) finds that most anthropologists now agree that

> 'culture' is not a homogenous web of meanings that a bounded group creates and reproduces and that can be damaged by change, but, rather, that 'culture' is an evolving process, an always changing, always fragmented product of negotiation and struggle that flows from multiple axes of inequality…Further, people who share [signs and practices]…may

> not view them in the same way, give them the same meanings, or hold them in precisely the same reverence. (p. 356)

Maynard (2002), however, finds that whereas it is now commonplace for academics to use postmodernism to emphasize difference, it is harder to find indications of "what difference actually means and how it can be made a constructive part of empirical research, theoretical analysis or practical political action in order to bring about change" (p. 111). She further asserts that pluralistic assumptions of difference tend "to emphasize what divides women, at the expense of those experiences that they might possibly share or have in common" (p. 119). Maynard's reservations about the possible implications that postmodern theory might have on feminist and other work is shared by scholars such as Sahlins (1995), who finds it suspect that "just when so many people are announcing the existence of their culture, advanced anthropologists are denying it" (p. 15). Indeed, postmodern theorists view culture as a socially constructed entity that can be readily deconstructed. However, just because culture – and tradition, for that matter – is not a concrete, real or true entity does not mean that its influence is not felt in real ways; emotionally charged debates concerning tradition and its role in Dene Games display the profound influence of notions of tradition and culture.

Hutcheon (1989) has proposed the idea of a postmodern critique that addresses many of the previously cited concerns. Hutcheon argues that postmodern representation is simultaneously complicit and critical. Put simply, "the postmodern we know has to acknowledge its own complicity with the very values upon which it seeks to comment" (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 10). In order to critique the modern (the reified, the static, the true), one must take up (i.e., be complicit with) the very terms one intends to undermine (i.e., *culture, tradition*). Hence, although some academics have attempted to undermine reified notions of culture and tradition, they – along with all other postmodern scholars - can never truly get beyond the terms they seek to analyse or undermine. Nevertheless, by destabilizing seemingly secure foundations for identity (e.g., culture), complicitous critique remains valuable and useful because it allows us to unveil the ways in which tradition, culture, and their ensuing meanings vary from person to person. For example, it allows the heterogeneity of Dene peoples and their traditions to be displayed, thus complicating subject positions that can be essentialized in anthropological renderings, as well as homogenous understandings of culture and tradition.

Undoubtedly, there are groups of people that struggle with unequal power relations, such as Aboriginal peoples, who have a great deal invested in notions of "legitimate" tradition. For example, Yorta Yorta Aborigines in Australia recently lost a land claim dispute when the High Court ruled that they failed to demonstrate that they were continuing to use their land in a "traditional" fashion (Associated Press, 2002). Some might view postmodern theory and the invention of tradition literature as ways in which to continue to undermine land claims processes and thus view such an approach as dangerous and flawed. The very opposite is true, however. By undermining the idea of "the legitimate tradition" we can become more appreciative of the ways in which "discrepant and ambiguous accounts [of tradition] provide an opening to understanding" (Keesing 1989, p. 40), especially about the ways in which traditions and culture must necessarily change and thus, how we must. in turn, recognize difference as being inherent to tradition and culture. As a result of this line of thinking, the Yorta Yorta's use of their land could still be viewed as being traditional, though – as this paper has demonstrated - not in a static, museum-like way.

Conclusion

Alonso (1988) points out that "difference is suffocated and dissolved in the all encompassing embrace of national and revolutionary fraternity" (p. 42). A suffocation and dissolution of difference has clearly occurred with Dene games, and particularly with the DTGA and the AWG. For example, Michael Vandel, the president of the DTGA said, "We should focus on the traditional way of doing it. It's respect for our elders. If…[women] don't understand that, then we don't have room for them" (Kay, 2002, p. B4). In evoking the "traditional" way of playing Dene games, the DTGA views as illegitimate the ways in which Dene games and Dene traditions are celebrated and played in communities that take a different view of the meaning of traditional games. By the same token, the AWGIC suffocates difference by relying on one set of rules and policies – most notably gender equity policies - that are to be applied to all Dene games at the AWG.[8] Consequently, the suffocation Alonso describes continues.

The tendency to represent traditional cultural practices and history across Denendeh as uniform and beyond debate muffles or silences dissenting voices. As a result, researchers who fail to acknowledge the fluidity of tradition and games practitioners alike lose out on the contested nature - the complexities, intricacies, and differences - of histories, cultures, and traditions. Alonso (1988) notes that

> histories are ideologically constituted. Re-presentations of the past are organized by interpretive schemes and by discursive strategies which produce effects of truth…The work of interpretation effaces itself and

> disguises the traces of its social production as history becomes 'what really happened'. Yet the past is neither transparent nor given: 'what really happened' is a focus of conflicting interpretations. (p. 50)

Conflicting interpretations speak to the differing/competing discourses that are in operation within discursive fields, in this case, the discursive field of traditional games. Indeed, representations of "what really happened" do not evolve in a power vacuum. Instead, certain voices are privileged over others. Although discourses of gender equity compete with discourses of traditionality and Aboriginal self-determination, we must also be cognizant of the power relations that inform these discourses and their interdiscursivity, which Fairclough (1992) describes as involving "the relations between other discursive formations which…constitute the rules of formation of a given discursive formation" (p. 47). Power struggles and ensuing resistance between Eurocanadians and Dene peoples, youth and Elders, and men and women are all implicated in the formation of differing points of view. These points of view are informed by personal experiences, which in turn inform understandings of tradition. Completing the circle, of course, these understanding of tradition are part of the formation of points of view.

The voices of Dene women have been conspicuously absent from discussions concerning Dene Games. As mentioned, the DTGA comprised only men. Along the same line, a review of every sport is held at the conclusion of that sport's competitions at the AWG. Because, to date, the Dene Games at the AWG have included only categories for men, one must once again ask about the presence of opportunities that are available

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for women to express their feelings on Dene Games and potential changes to these games.

The DTGA purports to want to maintain the traditional integrity of traditional games; such a position makes it difficult to make a compelling argument against the possible patriarchal underpinnings of this position. Those who would argue with this position find that they are not just arguing against the possible manipulation of male privilege but also against the maintenance of what some view as sacred traditions. Eurocanadian attempts to rework traditions in order to satisfy discontents can easily be met with accusations of colonialism or racism, whereas Indigenous peoples who try to bring about change can be accused of having lost touch with their culture.

Clearly, gender equity policies, such as those held by the Territorial Sport Federations, that demand equity in sport and recreation, have created pressure for the AWG to attempt to create a gender balance in opportunities for participation in the Games. Reliance upon Western feminist notions of gender equity, however, does little to quell the emotionally provocative voices of Aboriginal peoples who view the maintenance of their traditions as crucial for their cultural survival. Notably, though, all of these arguments fail to take into account the fact that there is no single tradition, but instead a range of traditions that are malleable.

Thus, anthropologists and sport participants alike bear the burden of complicating both past and present depictions of *the* history/tradition/culture of various groups of people in order to improve how we think and write about tradition, culture, and the ways in which human beings make these things. Recognizing interdiscursivity allows us to see how notions of tradition are informed by a wide variety of discourses, and, as a result, we are able to view tradition as an entity constructed within various ideological positions and power relations. For example, Cairns (1988) finds that Eurocanadian discourses are often privileged over those stemming from Aboriginal people and practices. Indeed, discourses that challenge the status quo are "likely to be marginal to existing practice and dismissed by the hegemonic system of meanings and practices as irrelevant or bad" (Weedon, 1987, p. 35). Consequently, and perhaps most importantly, by recognizing that there are discrepant notions of tradition, we are able to acknowledge and challenge some of the power relations that are involved in the privileging and/or subjugation of certain kinds of knowledge/perspectives. Certainly, as I have become increasingly aware of marginalized discourses within the discursive formation of traditional games, my view of tradition, ideology, and the role that power plays in re-presenting "legitimate Dene Games" have changed, as has my writing on this topic. Though the institutionalized post-positivist tyranny of producing "true," clear-cut representations of research will no doubt continue, we would all benefit from heeding Dening's (1995) words: "history is not the past; it is a consciousness of the past used for present purposes" (p. 171).

TRA-DISH-UNN, indeed.

Endnotes

[1] My research assistant served as my interpreter for interviews that were conducted with non-English speaking participants. She also conducted the interview with Angele Jumbo entirely on her own.

[2] I have included the number of participants with whom I conducted this research to allow the reader to have an understanding of the demographics of the participants. Every response, even if only given by one participant, was treated as significant. Interviews are referred to as "personal communications."

3 All participants who contributed to this paper reviewed the quotations attributed to them and agreed to their use.

[4] My archival research has shown that hand games were played at the 1981, 1985, 1991, and 1999 regional Dene Games. However, the sources that I used did not report if men or women or both sexes participated in hand games. Furthermore, hand games may have been played spontaneously (i.e., they might have been an informal activity for which participants did not earn points), and thus may not have been included in the sources as official games. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not women participated in hand games at these events. Most people I interviewed, however, had no recollection of women participating in hand games at regional Dene Games.

[5] Denendeh is the Dene name for the Dene region in the Northwest Territories.

[6] The names of participants that appear throughout the paper belong to those participants who wished to have them used. Several participants wished to remain completely anonymous or chose not to have certain quotations attributed to them: in these situations, the quote is attributed to "Anonymous."

[7] None of the people I interviewed were against women playing all Dene Games. Instead, there was a general understanding that hand games are different from most other Dene Games (with the notable exception of bow and arrow shoot, which involves men's hunting equipment and is thus tied to menstrual traditions). Some individuals mentioned a legend concerning the fact that women should not play snowsnake, but this oral tradition was not widespread and did not seem to be connected to menstrual traditions.

[8] According to AWGIC member Ian Legaree, the current rules for the Dene Games were created by the circulation of a draft package to each jurisdiction and then incorporating feedback until consensus is met (personal communication, June 2, 2003). As an interesting further sidenote, at its 2003 spring meeting the Mackenzie Recreation Association decided that rules for regional Dene Games will be decided by the host community, thus allowing for rule variation from year to year.

[9] Fairclough (1992) describes interdiscursivity as involving "the relations between other discursive formations which…constitute the rules of formation of a given discursive formation" (p. 47).

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Beyond "add women and stir": Feminisms, development, and Dene games

The term "development" often conjures up visions of well-intentioned, foreign development workers digging wells or organizing women's cooperatives. However, an often overlooked area of development occurs in the world of sport. Organizations such as Right to Play, a non-government organization that recognizes sport "as an important tool for development, health and peace" (Right to Play, online), have brought the world's attention to the use of sport as a development tool. While sport development takes place in many Third World countries, such activities also occur in Aboriginal communities in Canada. My use of the phrase "sport development" and concomitant investigation of attempts at gender equity in Dene Games in the NWT and at the Arctic Winter Games (AWG) is a deliberate attempt to elucidate the links between colonialism, Western feminisms, and sport, while also suggesting possible future directions for women's involvement in Dene games.

According to Johnston, Gregory, and Smith (1994), "[c]haracteristic features of the colonial situation include political and legal domination over an alien society, relations of economic and political dependence and exploitation between imperial power and colony, and racial and cultural inequality" (p. 75); the NWT and its sporting history and culture fit this description all too well.

The colonial legacy of the NWT began on June 23rd, 1870, when Canada purchased the continental portion of the NWT, known as Rupert's Land, from the Hudson's Bay Company. Notably, this purchase, along with the subsequent transfer of the islands of the Arctic Archipelago from Britain to Canada in 1890, failed to include any consultation with the residents of this vast region (Carter, 1997; Morrison, 1998).

This area was later divided into two territories: the Yukon, the NWT. In 1998, the NWT was divided to form a third Territory, Nunavut.[1]

Governance of the Yukon and the NWT can best be described as colonial. In 1955, the Canadian government brought bureaucracy to the North. Village centralization was initiated, and education, heath and social services were taken over by government departments (Kemp, 1984). Zaruwny states that "rigid hierarchical and bureaucratic structure…, although not very complex, was introduced to communities where initially traditional methods of flexibility, socio-political organizations and consensus had governed the structure of the decision-making process" (cited in Orvick and Patterson, 1976, p. 75). Orvick and Patterson (1976) assert that the implementation of such a structure was the first step in what would become a long tradition of imposing Southern models of decision-making on the NWT, a process that alienated the local population and resulted in apathy and distrust of government ideas. Indeed, the distrust may be well placed as, according to Coates (1985), the NWT has been "shackled by Canada's colonial system" (p. 11). Coates notes that, as a colony, the NWT has been developed according to the needs of the South, while Aboriginal peoples have had little opportunity for a say in the changes in the region.

The lack of consultation between the federal government and residents of the NWT in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century can be partly explained by the fact that the administration of the NWT operated out of Ottawa until 1967 (Paraschak, 1997). Thus, Canadian constitutional authority, much like other colonial powers, was "physically thousands of kilometres distant, and psychologically even further removed" (Coates, 1985, p. 9) from the realities of Northern life. The NWT was governed by a

Territorial Council that was comprised of Southern-based federal civil servants until after World War II, at which time local residents of the NWT were appointed to the Council (Coates & Powell, 1989). In 1974, the NWT Act was finally amended to allow for a fully elected Council of NWT residents (Coates & Powell, 1989).

The early Southern-based models of decision-making that marginalized the voices of Aboriginal residents of the NWT extended into sport and recreation programs and, it can be argued, continue to exist today. The federal government's support of the development of recreation programs in the NWT coincided with the centralization and organization of Aboriginal life. As participation in traditional games and activities that were tied to seasonal festivities "out on the land" decreased with centralization, the government increased its efforts to provide consistent recreation programs (Paraschak, 1985).

Due to the federal government's colonial mentality towards its Territories, it is perhaps not surprising that information concerning the early development of sport in the North does not allude to any form of consultation between the government and the Indigenous population. As a result, there have been some on-going difficulties in sport and recreation in the NWT:

> Differences between government services and community needs might be expected when people come from different backgrounds. The Government of the Northwest Territories is made up mainly of people originating from southern Canada, who have a different approach toward life than native northerners located in small communities. Since it is government workers who establish the programs and services for

> recreation, very often those programs end up being based on southern Canadian rather than native standards, even though they are created to meet native needs. (Paraschak, 1985, p. 11)

The AWG serve as a strong example of just such a program.

Arctic Winter Games and Sport Development

According to Paraschak (1983), the AWG "were conceived out of frustration by northerners involved in national sports competition" (p. 45) after the NWT and the Yukon were the worst performing teams at the 1967 Canada Winter Games. The first AWG, which included teams from Alaska, the NWT, and the Yukon, were held in Yellowknife in 1970 and were opened by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The AWG were organized in a manner that mirrored the Canada Games, a southern Canadian multi-sport competition between provinces, and initially included primarily "legitimate" Eurocanadian sport that operated as a meritocracy based on skill (Paraschak, 1997). In fact, Inuit Games/Arctic Sports[2] were included as only demonstration events in 1970 and 1972, and were added as official events in 1974 (Paraschak, 1983).

Paraschak (1983) notes that sport development has been one of the primary objectives of the AWG: "Both the AWG trials, and the Games themselves, have been used as an opportunity for more formal competition experience, as well as a forum for players, coaches and officials clinics" (p. 49). A 1976 Fitness and Amateur Sport review of the AWG found that "...in these areas of sparse and far-flung populations...AWG [is] more an instrument of sports, cultural and social development than an elitist sporting event" (cited in Paraschak, 1983, p. 50). However, Paraschak further notes that the "percentage of native people participating in the Games has been fairly small, ranging between 22% and 33% of the NWT contingent at any one Games"[3] (p. 49). As a result, it became clear that "the major benefactors of the AWG experience continued to be non-native individuals who had been trained previously in southern Canada" (p. 49). Thus, it appears that the AWG served, and arguably continue to serve, as an event that primarily developed Eurocanadian sport for Eurocanadians.

Roy Desjarlais, the former Executive Director of the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic (ASCWA), believes that the AWG do not adequately serve Aboriginal communities in the NWT:

> We saw that with the Games system that was developed by the Territorial Government and implemented by Sport North,[4] [Aboriginal] kids were getting left behind...You don't get the best of the best at the AWG - at least for the First Nations. Because we say, if that's the best of the best, why aren't we [Aboriginal peoples] there, because we have best people. Yellowknife can't be the best of the best, or [other large communities like] Hay River or Fort Smith or Inuvik. We may have a person in [small communities like] Kakisa or in Wha Ti that's the best of the best, but if we can't bring them forward and showcase them, how do I know?

The Northern Games

Some Aboriginal groups have had difficulty with the AWG since its inception. According to Paraschak (1983), the concept of the Northern Games originated in Inuvik as a reaction to the Eurocanadian sport dominated AWG. The first Northern Games took place in July 1970 and incorporated aspects of cultural practices and traditional games into a "[E]urocanadian-derived concept of a trans-Arctic festival in order to help create this emergent festival" (Paraschak, 1997, p. 12). The Northern Games philosophy encourages participation rather than excellence and promotes an atmosphere of camaraderie and self-testing rather than competitive equality (Paraschak, 1997). While competition is not the driving force, neither is time - the event schedule serves as only a rough guide. These differences provide a stark contrast to the Inuit Games/Arctic Sports portion of the AWG, which is organized in a similar fashion to Canada Summer and Winter Games:

> Competitive equality was to be ensured for the [Arctic Sports/Inuit Games] events [at AWG], based on established rules and well-orchestrated trials. Thus, rules were quickly established for Arctic Sports once they became an official event of the Games. Team uniforms, tight performance schedules, and specific age and sex categories were all an integral part of the Games. (Paraschak, 1983, pp. 53-4)

Because the Northern Games failed to subscribe the Eurocanadian/Southern sporting norms found at the AWG and Canada Games, federal government officials chose to view the Northern Games as more of a cultural event than a sporting event. As a result, the government became increasingly reluctant to help to fund the Northern Games, which officials viewed as being in direct competition with the AWG.

The philosophical and cultural differences that set the Northern Games apart from Eurocanadian sport resulted in ongoing frustrations for the Northern Games. In response to the Green Paper on Sport (1977), the Northern Games Association stated that "sports in the south also are cultural events with a different purpose (i.e., a winning purpose in a win-oriented culture). Must we buy this ethic to be funded" (Northern Games

Association as cited in Paraschak, 1997, p. 12)? Despite such compelling arguments, the Northern Games continued to struggle for funding from the federal government. For example, in a 1980 letter from the Fitness and Amateur Sport (FAS) Branch of the Government of Canada to the Northern Games Association, a FAS employee wrote:

> we studied our relationship with your organization very closely and concluded that the activities of the [Northern Games] association do not fall within the mandate and objectives of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch. I also want to point out that we are providing substantial funding to the Arctic Winter Games, an event which relates much more closely to the objectives of this Branch (Willette to Bernhardt, 16 January, 1980, cited in Paraschak, 1983, p. 56).

This letter illustrates beautifully Paraschak's (1985) point: the programs developed and funded for Northern/Aboriginal residents were based on Southern Canadian standards, even though they were created to meet Northern/Aboriginal needs. As a result, the benefits of sport development, as well as the colonial impulses/forces behind them, need to be brought into question.

The Dene Games

The Dene Games have a different history, yet it is one that shares many of the same struggles that Northern Games and Inuit Games/Arctic Sports have had. While Dene Games have been played on the land and in the bush since time immemorial, within the past 25 years they have also taken on a less spontaneous, more codified form. The first Dene Games took place in Rae-Edzo in 1977 and took the structure of a summertime softball tournament that included participants from surrounding Dene communities

(Paraschak, 1983). Over time, the format of the Games, which have with few exceptions taken place on an annual basis, has changed to include a greater focus on traditional games (e.g., axe throw, hand games, coin toss, etc.).

Unlike Inuit Games/Arctic Sports, which have been a part of the AWG since its inception (albeit as a demonstration sport in the early years), Dene Games were only added to the AWG in 1990. When they were added, the only category available for competition was for Senior Men. While the additions of a Senior Men's category and, in 2002, a Junior Men's category were accepted with relative ease, the same cannot be said of efforts to develop and control Dene Games for women.

Government of the NWT & Sport North control of Dene Games

Despite the fact that Dene Games have been held annually for over 25 years, a Territorial Sport Organization (TSO) for Dene Games has yet to emerge.[5] As a result, the organization of Dene Games for the AWG has been done on an ad hoc basis, with different groups of people taking the reins at different times. In 2002, a group calling themselves the Denendeh Traditional Games Association (DTGA) held a founding annual general meeting with the hopes of organizing something very similar to a TSO. Ian Legaree, Director of the Sport, Recreation, and Youth Division of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) at the Government of the NWT (GNWT) explains,

> [i]t doesn't happen often, but when there's a group forming that wants to become a new TSO, the Department will typically fund a founding AGM for them, which we did with that association, and they had that founding AGM. Then they made some policy announcements that were contrary to

> Government policy and we subsequently withdrew our support. If they choose to…come back together and get themselves organized again, they can apply to [the Territorial Sport Federation] Sport North like any TSO does for funding support. (I. Legaree, personal communication, Jan. 29, 2004)

Importantly, though, the DTGA did not want to be like any other TSO, and the policy announcements that it made illustrated that very point; as an Aboriginal organization, they wanted to exist outside of the confines of Sport North, and they wanted their beliefs, in this case, that women should not participate in Dene Games, to be honoured (Kay, 2002). Control over Dene Games and the development of Dene Games for women thus represent contested terrain.

In the past, Dene Games were played almost exclusively by men (Giles, 2004; Helm & Lurie, 1966; Heine, 1999). Although some examples of women's participation have been documented (e.g., Giles, n.d.), women's past involvement in Dene Games, particularly a form of stick gambling known as hand games, was rare and, to this day, continues to be quite limited. Explanations for women's limited involvement in Dene Games focus on two issues related to menstruation: power and pollution.

Menstrual practices and beliefs among the Dene have been documented by a number of authors (Abel, 1993; Giles, 2004; Goulet, 1998; Helm, 2000). In the past, Dene girls went through rites of passage when they had their first menses. Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson resident Suza Tsetso explains,

> As soon as they get their cycle…they're instructed, they're taught from a very young age and they're aware of it, they get a stick and they hit the

> tree and they make noise so that…the grandmother or auntie or mother knows that noise. They go to where she's at, build a little hut, a shelter around her and they leave her there and she doesn't leave that spot, and that's where she'll stay for up to a year…So what happens is that she stays there and the teachers come. The mother comes and teaches her a sewing technique of some kind and stays with her for maybe a few days or how long it takes her to master that skill. When she masters that skill, the grandmother comes and visits her, but they don't stay, they visit her every day. They talk to her and they teach her stories. They do that sometimes for a month, that same person comes. When she masters another skill, that person leaves and another person comes. Then that person comes and teaches a different sewing technique, so [she] learns from the women in the whole community. One by one they come, and this woman is created, her skills are created from all the Elders and the people who have these skills and they leave. When she's ready to come into the community, it's a whole celebration where she comes and there's gathering, they're a prayer offering and a prayer song and she's brought back into the community where she does a dance once around the circle and that's where she's starting her life. And the whole community celebrates that. (Personal communication, Feb. 14, 2004)

Menstrual practices continued into women's adult lives. When menstruating, women would stay in a hut:

> [You] [n]ever see women out when you know women are on their cycle, the mothers, grandmothers, aunts, daughters, they're supposed to stay in their own corner…They're not supposed to walk on the same path as men. They have their own washroom, their own exit, their own cup, their own dishes, they had a little bowl like this to drink water out of because they're not allowed to drink like that, with their hand or cup, they had a little bowl that they used…[S]he can go out and do other things with everyone else, but as soon as she's on her cycle, the mother knows, the grandmother knows, the whole community knows. It's not something that's hidden. When she gets her cycle again, she leaves and she stays in her place…[S]he doesn't leave that corner for up to a week or maybe two weeks, until her cycle is finished, totally finished, then she can leave. (S. Tsetso, personal communication, Feb. 12, 2004)

In many places in the NWT, menstrual practices have become less prevalent and/or less stringent. For instance, in 1951 June Helm found that "all" female residents of Tthedzehk'edeli/Jean Marie River (JMR) (which she called Lynx Point) segregated themselves while menstruating (Helm, 2000). During my own fieldwork in the community in 2003, however, I learned that women no longer engage in menstrual segregation, though some women may curtail their involvement in some activities; my research in Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson revealed the same finding. However, residents of another NWT community, Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake, continue to follow several practices relating to menstruation. For instance, many female community members in Sambaa

K'e/Trout Lake do not participate in aquatics based activities, eat fish, birds or berries, or go anywhere they "don't have to" (Giles, 2004, p. 26).

Discourses of pollution and/or power are prevalent in many ethnographic accounts of menstruation. Buckley and Gottlieb (1988) find that most ethnographic reports of menstrual practices and beliefs view menstrual blood as "symbolically dangerous and otherwise defiling" (p. 4). Buckley and Gottlieb further find that these "analyses have great predictability, for again and again they center on the concepts of *taboo* (supernaturally sanctioned law) and *pollution* (symbolic contamination)" (p. 4; authors' emphasis). While notions of pollution and taboo have been used as the primary explanations for menstrual practices, Anderson (2000) asserts that Aboriginal women's segregation during menstruation is based not on impurity, but instead on the enhanced power that women have during this time.

Residents of Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake, Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson, and Tthedzehk'edeli/JMR draw on discourses of both pollution and power in describing the reasons why women have not historically participated in hand games, a Dene Game that involves a moosehide drum, which many view to be sacred. For instance, Derrick Norwegian of Tthedzehk'edeli/JMR explained that if a menstruating woman played hand games it could bring about "[b]ad luck and stuff like that" (Personal communication, Aug. 5, 2003). Several women informed me that if a man were to come in contact with a menstruating woman, including in the context of hand games, it would have a negative impact on his hunting abilities.[6] Suza Tsetso elucidated the power associated with menstruation:

> the woman has the power to give life and during that time when she's on her menstrual cycle, she has the power to take it…[S]he can bring negative energy or positive energy, and that's something that you don't interfere with, because if a part of your body is dying, going through a cycle, then you're closer to the spirit world than you are at your regular time. (Personal communication, Feb. 12, 2004)

While there appears to be a general level of agreement among research participants on the basic elements of menstrual practices, the practices themselves, and the beliefs behind them, differ. Thus, it is evident that there is a continuum of the degree to which communities, and individuals within communities, engage in menstrual practices and beliefs.

As a result of the differences in beliefs and practices concerning menstrual practices and women's involvement in Dene Games, but especially hand games, it becomes difficult to create rules and policies that will please everyone. For instance, prohibiting women from participating in Dene Games, particularly hand games, would likely please those who do not believe that women should be participating in such games. Nevertheless, such regulations would meet with the ire of those who believe very strongly that women should indeed be involved in Dene Games, as it is important for women to be involved in traditional practices. Karla Moir, an Aboriginal woman and spectator at the 2004 AWG, noted that women can help with the re-birth of cultural practices. She further stated "it's hard to be picky with culture these days if you don't use the resources you have" (Personal communication, March 1, 2004). Thus, finding ways in which to "develop" Dene Games for women becomes difficult.

Sport Development

I use the term "development" with the acknowledgement that it is a word that is fraught with difficulties, one that carries with it the connotation of hegemonic European ambitions to "civilize" (that is, to make more European) certain areas, groups of people, and practices. Indeed, development is a process of social transformation, and the development field is associated with a particular world-view (Kabeer, 1994). Rowlands (1998) finds that the view of "'development-as-Westernization' has come to dominate to such a degree that [it] has become virtually impossible for any different possibility even to be imagined" (p. 12). Indeed, it appears that many non-Aboriginal sport and recreation programmers and participants have difficulty imagining Dene Games outside of a Western/Southern[7] framework.

While, undoubtedly, people are encouraged to engage in sporting activities for fitness, health, and fun, most sport programs unquestioningly accept the capitalist doctrine of the need for competition, as well as other culture-bound ideas. Indeed, sport and sport development can be used to push certain agendas, including an agenda of particular understandings of gender equity. The pressure to impose gender equity in sport stems from a number of fronts, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the *United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), as well as gender equity policies. Sport North has a gender equity policy that states, "the Sport North Federation, in cooperation with the Territorial Sport Organizations will work towards an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to girls and women when developing, delivering and evaluating its programs" (1992, p. 2). Notably, however, the policy fails to define "equitable." Furthermore, this policy indicates that the equitable conditions that the *Charter* and *Declaration* prescribe are not present, but are instead a goal. But whose goal?

Feminist development models provide interesting ways through which one can theorize women's participation in sport and recreation. Furthermore, these models are particularly appropriate for the case at hand for several reasons. Firstly, while Canada is considered to be a First World nation, there is international recognition that Indigenous peoples living within Canada often live in Third World, non-"Western" conditions. Secondly, like sport and recreation development, Third World development has been controlled by seemingly well-meaning outsiders and "experts," while local knowledge, particularly stemming from women, has been largely marginalized and subjugated. Finally, Third World development projects (e.g., agriculture), and particularly the role of gender in such projects, have received much more attention than sport development. By examining the promises and pitfalls of the application of various feminist development models in other regions of the world and concerning other areas of interest, there are rich opportunities for learning that can be carried over into the area of sport development.

Feminist Development Models

According to Visvanathan (1997), three distinct theoretical debates have shaped and continue to shape development projects aimed at women: Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD).

Women in Development (WID)

The WID approach, also known as "add women and stir," came into use in the 1970s and seeks equality between men and women. By integrating women into development projects, WID has been used in attempts to extend the benefits of modernization to women. Nevertheless, WID has been critiqued on several fronts. The use of liberal and modernization theories within WID are the primary complaints that feminists have lodged against this approach to development. For instance, Chowdhry (1995) reminds us that both liberal and modernization theories are "embedded in Enlightenment assumptions, which are imbued with a masculinist (and modernist) epistemology" (p. 28). Barriteau (1995) notes that liberal political theory ignores women, and the inclusion of women "merely stretch[es] liberal…discourse without challenging [its] patriarchal assumptions" (p. 143). As a result, she believes that liberal theory is unable to "accommodate feminist interests which threaten [its] very foundations" (p. 143).

Modernization theory has been critiqued on similar grounds. Chowdhry (1995) finds that in "the incidental and sparse remarks that modernization theory makes about women, women are essentially represented as tradition-bound conservatives and therefore obstacles to modernization" (p. 29). Furthermore, she finds that modernization theory creates an overly simplistic traditional-modern dichotomy, where "modernization is equated with Westernization, industrialization, and superiority whereas non-modernity is equated with non-Western countries, tradition and inferiority" (p. 29). And, as Parpart and Marchand (1995) point out, it is possible that "modernization" and "progress" may be unobtainable and/or undesirable goals for some women.

WID has also been critiqued for its acceptance of social structures, its treatment of women as a homogenous group, its failure to address the reproductive aspects of some women's lives, and also for overlooking Indigenous knowledge (Parpart & Marchand, 1995; Visvanathan, 1997). Chowdhry (1995) aptly sums up WID:

> The liberal feminist struggle to establish WID has at once succeeded and failed. It has succeeded in establishing WID divisions within international development regimes and fostering mostly separate projects for women. Its epistemological foundations and existence within these development agencies, however, have limited it from moving beyond the assumptions of modernization, of whose impact it was critical. (p. 38)

Thus, while WID was successful in highlighting the need for women to be involved in the development process, its shortcomings resulted in the need for a new feminist development theory framework.

Women and Development (WAD)

WAD was developed as a critique of WID. Drawing on Marxist and dependency theories, it focuses on the relations between women and development processes. Unlike WID, which seeks to integrate women into development systems, WAD acknowledges that women have always been part of development processes. According to Visvanathan (1997), WAD's major contributions to feminist development theory include: the acceptance of the importance of women as economic actors; the acknowledgement that women's work in both the public and private spheres play a central role in the maintenance of societal structures; and its ability to examine the way in which women's integration into development maintains existing international structures of inequality.

WAD, like WID, is not beyond critique. The Marxist preoccupation with women's so-called productive role comes at the expense of paying appropriate attention to the reproductive aspects of women's work and lives (Visvanathan, 1997). Furthermore, WAD fails to examine critically the relationship between "patriarchy, differing modes of production and women's subordination and oppression" (Visvanathan, 1997, p. 18), as well as relations between gender roles.

Gender and Development (GAD)

In the 1980s, concerns about the growing poverty of both women and men in the Third World resulted in calls for a new approach to women's development (Parpart & Marchand, 1995). Hence, GAD was developed as an alternative to WAD. GAD differs from WAD in that it focuses on gender relations and not on women *per se* (Young, 1997). Influenced by socialist feminism, GAD takes a holistic approach to analysing women's lives, while also welcoming the contributions of male allies. By paying special attention to the oppression women experience in the so-called private sphere – especially their non-commodity production - and by viewing women as agents of change and resistance and not as passive recipients of development aid, GAD is able to challenge power relations in ways that WID and WAD cannot (Visvanathan, 1997).

In GAD, gender is viewed as a social category that is constructed through the "acquisition of locally-defined attributes of masculinity and femininity" (Kabeer cited in Parpart & Marchand, 1995, p. 11). As a result, with a GAD perspective there exists the possibility and goal of transforming gender roles, such as the division of labour (Parpart & Marchand, 1995), as well as a fundamental re-examination of institutions, social structures, and hierarchical gender relations (Rathgeber, 1995).

Some development scholars and practitioners have begun to call for a postmodern approach towards feminist development theory (e.g., Barriteau,1995; Parpart & Marchand, 1995). Postmodernism's contributions to feminist development theory include critiques of modernity, Western universalism, and dualist/binary thinking, interrogations of power relations, and the surfacing of subjugated knowledge (Parpart, 1995). In particular, postmodernism's acknowledgement of difference between and within women is useful in creating development frameworks that are capable of dealing with the fact that, as Nzomo (1995) points out, "[g]ender subordination is…not uniformly experienced by all women in the same way with the same intensity at all times" (p. 136).

Some feminist development scholars and practitioners believe that postmodernism's insistence on recognizing difference and diversity rather than unity results in the fragmentation of women and the subsequent dismissal of "women" as a category, thus rendering political action impossible and postmodern feminism untenable (Nzomo, 1995; Udayagiri, 1995). Not surprisingly, postmodern feminists disagree. Marchand and Parpart (1995) argue that

> political action grounded in differences, and open to the limitations of both knowledge claims and action, could be more effective in the long run, both for its capacity to build alliances with oppositional groups and because it would (possibly) be more difficult for the state to repress or co-opt such decentered alliances" (p.129).

Correspondingly, Barriteau (1995) believes that a postmodern feminist focus on the fluid nature of social relations and identities does not have to inhibit political action. Instead, she finds that postmodernist feminist development theory can result in coalition politics that politicize "differing manifestations of gender subordination without imprisoning us in an essentialist, fixed frame" (p. 151).

Of the three feminist development models outlined above, GAD is best able to articulate with postmodern theory. According to Rathgeber (1995), WID "has been formulated on the assumption that there is a single woman's voice, and that 'voice' is drawn largely from the experiences of white, middle-class women in [Western countries]" (p. 207). In contrast, GAD approaches acknowledge that there is no single voice for women, and that women's lives are "affected by multiple factors, such as race, ethnicity and class" (p. 207). Consequently, those who employ a GAD perspective explore "both the connection among and the contradictions of gender, class, race, and development" (p. 206).

Women in Dene Games/Women and Dene Games

Efforts to include girls and women in sport, recreation, and coaching have often taken a WID approach. Such an approach assumes that women can and should be mainstreamed into projects and programs. However, it does little or nothing to challenge existing power structures, and fails to pay attention to existing resistances that may not be recognized as legitimate reasons why girls and women are not participating in the first place. Mayoux (1995) points out that women's needs cannot be addressed without "addressing underlying aspects of gender subordination such as the unequal division of reproductive labour, restrictions on female mobility, domestic violence, women's lack of autonomy and so on" (p. 242). For instance, women rarely have as much free time as men in the same household and thus have fewer opportunities for participation in leisure activities (Mayoux, 1995).

ASCWA's attempt to develop Dene Games programming for girls serves as an example of a WID/WAD hybrid approach. As a result of the addition of the Junior Girl's category and for reasons of sport development in general, ASCWA implemented a travelling Dene Games program. Male and female Dene Games instructors travelled to

NWT communities offering a program through which young male and female Northerners learned how to play Dene Games in the hope that NWT youth would become skilled enough to facilitate quality regional/territorial competition for AWG Trials and the Games themselves:

> We made it quite clear in our public announcements that we [ASCWA] supported females in the Dene Games…[W]e saw no problems with instructors being with the females. In fact, they were encouraged. [The instructors] were keen to teach…The girls were very keen on learning. We were hoping that those camps that we put on a year ago would pay off at the [AWG] Trials…but I don't think there are very many who have taken an interest…(R. Desjarlais, personal communication, Jan. 30, 2004)

The lack of distinction between men and women's involvement in this process might seem laudable, unproblematic, and a suitable response to past and existing inequalities concerning the Dene Games at the AWG. Nevertheless, this WID/WAD hybrid approach is problematic in that it failed to challenge or even address the reasons why women have not been involved in Dene Games to any great extent in the past. Thus, it is not surprising that there were not very many girls who were interested in participating in Dene games beyond the workshops.

Gender and Dene Games

In a Eurocanadian dominated sportscape, it is often difficult for sport organizers and participants to view sporting practices that differ from the mainstream as being anything other than wrong. In terms of gender equity issues, there is a great deal of pressure on sport organizations to implement and enforce gender equity policies. While there is often wide-spread support for gender equity, the same cannot be said for the recognition of cultural self-determination. Based on cultural beliefs, some Dene residents of the NWT, e.g., the DTGA, feel that it is inappropriate for women to participate in Dene Games. As a result of these cultural beliefs – which some construe as being sexist - the GNWT has refused to provide the DTGA with funding. In short, much as the Northern Games were limited by the federal government's view of what exactly represented a legitimate sporting event, the DTGA and Dene Games are limited by the GNWT's view of legitimate sporting experiences and participants; if the DTGA is not willing to play by the GNWT's rules (e.g., the GNWT's version of gender equity), it cannot play at all. As a result, Dene Games development is tied heavily to government/Sport North/ASCWA agendas, as well as these organizations' belief in the inherent value of gender equity and women's involvement in Dene Games.

A postmodern GAD approach to Dene Games would display the contested nature women's involvement in Dene Games and, as a result, would challenge the current WID-based, colonial approach to women's involvement in Dene Games at the AWG. A postmodern GAD approach would also result in a form of Dene Games that would be able to meet the needs of Dene Games participants and organizers alike to a greater extent than WID or WAD approaches.

The addition of the Junior Girls category to the AWG has taken an "add women and stir" approach. A girl's category was added to the events in which the Senior Men and Junior Men compete: stick pull, hand games, snowsnake, finger pull, and pole push. Each contingent can send only four competitors, and four competitors are needed in the team events (i.e., hand games and pole push). So, if a Junior Girl's competitor decided that, based on her belief system, she wanted to refrain from participating in hand games, her team would be seriously disadvantaged or disqualified for competing with fewer than four competitors. Thus, a new vision for Dene Games could include a choice of categories for women, the addition of typically "women's games" (e.g., moosehide ball games) to the current list of events offered, the use of substitutes for menstruating players or players who do not want to compete in certain events due to spiritual beliefs, options for the number of competitors in the team events, or – most radically – omit gendered categories entirely. Importantly, at an organizational/administrative level, a postmodern GAD approach would result in the interrogation of power relations among men and women, the GNWT, Sport North, and Aboriginal organizations.

Conclusion

The colonial legacy of the NWT continues to haunt (Gordon, 1997) physical practices, particularly Dene Games, in the NWT today. Sport development for Dene Games is currently embedded within a WID/WAD framework, one that is unable to address power relations in a meaningful manner. As noted above, the adoption of a postmodern GAD framework for future Dene Games development, for both men and women, would be an important step forward in addressing current power imbalances in and approaches to Dene Games.

One of the great strengths of a postmodern GAD approach is that it is able to accommodate critiques of colonialism, which is especially important for sport development models that will be used with and applied to Indigenous populations in Canada's North. According to McEwan (2001), "postcolonialism, like feminism, is a powerful critique of 'development'" (p. 94). McEwan also states that there are a number of core issues that underpin postcolonial approaches to development – issues that are able to articulate with postmodern GAD approaches, which we will recall involve critiques of modernity, Western universalism, dualist/binary thinking, as well as interrogations of power relations, and the surfacing of subjugated knowledge (Parpart, 1995). McEwan (2001) finds that postcolonial critiques are able to: "stress the need to destablize the dominant discourses of imperial Europe, including 'development,'" (p. 94); "problematize the very ways in which the world is known, challenging the unacknowledged and unexamined assumptions…that are profoundly insensitive to the meanings, values and practices of other cultures" (p. 94); and "attempt to recover the lost historical and contemporary voices of the marginalized, the oppressed and the dominated, through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production"' (p. 95). As a result, a postmodern GAD approach is able to provide a powerful critique of colonialism, one that is missing from WID and WAD.

A postmodern GAD approach is also able to acknowledge that there is no one answer or approach to Dene Games that will make everyone happy. This, however, is not to say that postmodernism should be taken as a radical form of relativism, where sexism is ignored. As Flax (1992) points out,

> [p]ostmodernism is not a form of relativism because relativism only takes on meaning as the partner of its binary opposite- universalism. Relativists assume the lack of an absolute standard is significant: 'everything is relative' because there is no one thing to measure all claims by. If the hankering for an absolute universal standard were absent, 'relativism' would lose its meaning and force. (pp. 452-453)

Flax also states that "[w]e cannot understand knowledge without tracing the effects of the power relations which simultaneously enable and limit the possibilities of discourse" (p. 453). By examining power relations and failing to "hanker" for a universal standard, a postmodern approach opens up space for multiple interpretations of issues, while simultaneously allowing for the acknowledgment of the multifaceted, multi-layered power relations at work.

For example, it would be relatively easy to portray the issue of women's involvement in Dene Games as relating only to issues of sexism/gender equity. As Ian Legaree put it, "[the DTGA] said no women, so no women means no support from the Government [of the NWT]" (Personal communication, Jan. 29, 2004). In a careful read of this statement, however, we also learn that GNWT officials have the ability to exercise financial power over Aboriginal groups and also to direct the development of women's and girls' involvement in Dene Games. Thus, women's involvement in Dene Games becomes not only an issue of potential sexism and power relations between men and women, but also an issue of struggles for cultural self-determination and unequal power relations between Aboriginal peoples and the GNWT, both of which are closely tied to/remnants of colonialism.

The levels at which a postmodern GAD perspective towards Dene games should be targeted also requires examination. To date, ASCWA appears to have targeted young people, a group which ASCWA views as being future Dene games participants and leaders. In returning to the example noted above, the Dene games training program had very limited success in generating AWG participants. Indeed, without the support of family and community members, young people may not feel empowered or encouraged to participate in such activities. As a result, perhaps a re-evaluation of the target population is in order. If encouraging young people, and particularly young women, to participate in Dene games is in fact the goal, ASCWA, the GNWT and its policy makers could attempt to educate community members on the perceived importance of strengthening Dene games participation in younger populations. Elders, too, could play a prominent role in this process. Providing participants with childcare, transportation to training sessions, and recognition for their work would also go a long way in facilitating Dene games programming, particularly for young parents. A sense of acceptance and support from community and family members will likely do far more to enhance young people's participation than merely teaching them how to play Dene games.

In short, sport development initiatives need to address the challenges that postmodern GAD approaches put forth. Along these lines, sport development initiatives and those who implement them need to be cognizant of the levels at which sport development can be targeted, other, non-Western, ways of knowing, and the ways in which power relations (between men and women, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, governmental and non-governmental agencies, etc) can play themselves. Thus, interrogations of sport development also require interrogations of the links between colonialism, Western feminisms, and sport. Such efforts will allow sport development initiatives, such as those used with Dene Games, to - once and for all - move beyond "add women and stir."

Endnotes

[1] In general, the territories have the same responsibilities as Canada's provinces, except that the territories lack jurisdiction over land and resource administration, which avails the North to ready exploitation for mineral wealth.

[2] There is currently a movement to change the name of the Arctic Sports section of the AWG to Inuit Games, as some participants and organizers feel that "Inuit Games" better represents the spirit of this category of events. Thus, I include both terms to indicate the contested nature of the name of this category of events. Inuit games include events such as knuckle hop, airplane, one foot high kick, two foot high kick, Alaskan high kick, etc.

[3] Interestingly, the Government of the NWT no longer tracks these statistics, as they are based on racial characteristics. While ignoring race may be viewed as a welcomed move towards the elimination of racism, it also results in the absence of statistics that can be used to make the case that certain populations, such as Aboriginal peoples, may be underserviced or marginalized.

[4] Sport North is the Territorial Sport Federation for the Northwest Territories.

[5] The Territorial Sport Organization for each AWG sport is responsible for AWG team selection. For example. NWT Badminton would be responsible for organizing a badminton tournament or selection camp in order to select AWG team members.

[6] Along the same lines, Irwin (1994) writes that many North American Indigenous groups view menstruation as being potentially detrimental to a man's hunting abilities: "In these societies 'menstrual blood is not thought of as polluting but as clashing with a man's power(s)' (p. 177).

[7] I deliberately do not include Aboriginal frameworks within Western/Southern frameworks. I do so for two reasons: Firstly, many Aboriginal peoples and organizations do not identify with Western/Southern (with Southern referring to South of the 60th parallel) frameworks; secondly, most Western/Southern frameworks fail to include Aboriginal peoples lives, ways, and knowledge.

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The Acculturation Matrix and the Politics of Difference:

Women and Dene Games

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"Sport expresses the context of culture in its existence and modifies the culture by its existence."
(Felshin, 1974, p. 180)

The Arctic Winter Games (AWG) attempts to locate itself within a sporting/cultural community that is markedly different from the mainstream sporting community. While the Arctic Winter Games International Committee (AWGIC) and its policies are purported to ensure that the AWG take the form of a unique sporting/cultural festival, their drive towards a largely Southern model of sport renders such boundaries artificial and, at times, invisible. Berry's (2001) framework of acculturation strategies in ethnocultural groups and Young's (1992) politics of difference are useful in exploring the tensions involved in attempts at difference in the largely hegemonic, ethnocentric context provided by sport in Canada. While assimilation, separation, and marginalization have been the predominant methods through which Aboriginal sport has been acculturated into Canadian society, integration, which Berry identifies as being the most favourable intercultural strategy, has been under-utilized. However, research conducted at the Dene Games component of the 2004 AWG brings into question the possibility of a form of integration that is able to meet the needs of participants, organizers, and spectators alike, which in turn leads to questions about Berry's framework in general. The recent addition of a Junior Women's category to the Dene Games at the AWG provides an intriguing case study of acculturation of not only physical practices, but also culture-bound gender roles into mainstream sport. This change, which has been met with both acceptance and resistance, illustrates how the issue of girls' and women's participation in Dene Games is part of a multifaceted, ongoing struggle where Aboriginal groups are grappling for self-determination within a sport and recreation delivery system that has a heavily prescribed set of largely southern-derived policies and practices. This paper explores the Dene Games at the AWG and women's involvement in these Games through an acculturation lens, while concomitantly questioning the potential problems with attempts at integrating Dene Games into a mainstream framework.

The Cosmopolitan Community & the Politics of Difference

The rhetoric surrounding the AWG is one of cosmopolitanism, which Rabinow (1986) defines as "an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness (often forced upon people) of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates" (p. 258). He further finds that "although we are all cosmopolitans, *Homo sapiens* have done rather poorly in interpreting this condition. We seem to have trouble with the balancing act, preferring to reify local identities or construct universal ones. We live in-between" (p. 258). Indeed, despite the intentions of creating a cosmopolitan sporting community at the AWG, there is a general reluctance for Dene Games participants, and particularly organizers, to join such a community.

Despite the warm/fuzzy connotations of the word "community," Weiss (1995) reminds us to be cognizant of its danger, finding that communities can damage both those "within and those outside of them" (p. 7). Certainly, the greatest dangers exist for those who live in the margins, which Kirby and McKenna (1989) describe as "the context in which those who suffer injustice, inequality and exploitation live their lives" (p. 7). Danger exists for those in the margins because the urge to form a cohesive and unproblematic community can suffocate difference (Young, 1992). Rather than privileging the notion of community, Young (1992) instead calls for a politics of difference, which she believes "lays down institutional and ideological means for recognizing and affirming differently identifying groups in two basic senses: giving political representation to group interests and celebrating the distinctive cultures and characteristics of different groups" (p. 319). Within this framework there exists interesting possibilities for Dene Games at the AWG.

Acculturation

As Geertz (1988) notes, we live in a world where "it is increasingly difficult to get out of each other's way" (p. 147). Not only do our bodies physically collide on busy city streets, but our ideologies often bump up against each other. The term "acculturation" refers to changes that result from contact between members of different cultural groups (Berry, 2001). Attitudes towards acculturation and residents of Canada's North have changed over time. According to Morrison (1998),

> [b]efore 1940, the federal government had based its policy with respect to the Indians and, even more, the Inuit of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories on the position that the less their indigenous way of life was interfered with, the better. According to the official view, it was impossible – and undesirable in any case – to integrate them into the wider Canadian society. (p. 153)

However, this attitude changed with the development of an increasingly secular Euro-Canadian style education in the 1950s. Educational institutions, particularly residential schools, in the NWT - as in other parts of Canada - served as a powerful tools in the acculturation of Indigenous peoples of the North. Forbidden from speaking their ancestral languages and transplanted enormous distances from their homes, students in the NWT were exposed to a culture vastly different from their own (Morrison, 1998).

The infamous Trudeau government's assimilationist White Paper of 1968, which proposed the abolishment of reserves and the widespread assimilation of Aboriginal peoples into Euro-Canadian mainstream society, shows just how far the pendulum swung away from the former position of non-interference. While education and official government policy provide strong examples of forays into various forms of acculturation, Dene Games, too, provide compelling examples.

Berry (2001) posits four different intercultural strategies used by ethnocultural groups: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. Each of these strategies utilizes differing amounts of what he refers to as cultural shedding and culture learning (Berry, 1992). In cultural shedding, the non-dominant ethnocultural group sheds its former practices, beliefs, and behaviours, while in cultural learning, the non-dominant group takes on the practices, beliefs, and behaviours of the dominant ethnocultural group. Assimilation occurs when there is maximal cultural shedding and maximal cultural

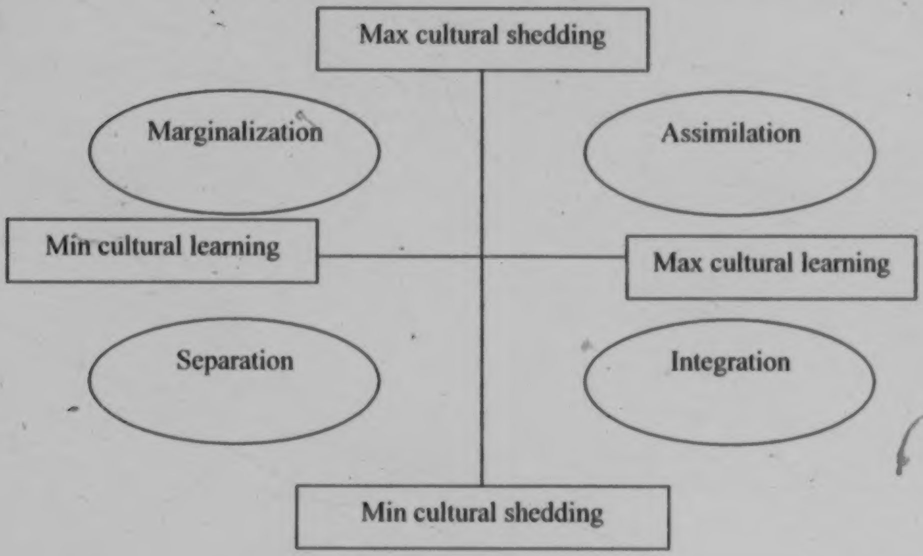
Max cultural shedding
Marginalization
Assimilation
Min cultural learning
Max cultural learning
Separation
Integration
Min cultural shedding

Figure 1: Berry's (1992) Acculturation framework

learning, while the opposite - minimal cultural shedding and minimal cultural learning - results in separation. Marginalization, on the other hand, takes place when there is maximal culture shedding combined with minimal cultural learning. Finally, integration involves moderate to substantial cultural learning along with minimal culture shedding.

Assimilation (maximal cultural shedding and maximal cultural learning)

Assimilation into mainstream sport can be seen in most, if not all, Aboriginal communities. In this age of globalization, children in the farthest corner of the arctic proudly sport NHL jerseys and baseball caps. Indeed, from sport clothing to sports themselves, acculturation in the form of assimilation can be seen with relative ease. In fact, it is far more common to see community members playing hockey and volleyball rather than snowsnake or finger pull. Assimilation can also be seen at the AWG. Held in the circumpolar region, the AWG mirror the Canada Games, a Southern Canadian multi-sport competition between provinces and the territories. The first AWG took place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories in 1970, and, notably, included Indigenous sport as only a cultural adjunct to the Eurocanadian sport that operated as a meritocracy based on skill (Paraschak, 1997). Since its humble beginnings, the Arctic Winter Games have grown. Teams from Nunavut, Nunavik, Northern Alberta, Greenland, several Russian provinces, and the Saami now join the three original teams of NWT, Yukon, and Alaska. Every two years, over 1,500 athletes take part in the Games, which stress athletic competition, cultural exhibition, and social exchange. These philosophical tenets are supported through both sporting and cultural events. Despite the inclusion of Arctic Sports (also known as Inuit Games) and Dene Games, low levels of Aboriginal participants prevail (Paraschak, 1997) and, as a result, the extent to which assimilation can be said to take place is questionable. Nevertheless, the low level of Aboriginal participation and high numbers of Southern-derived sporting activities are only two of the ways in which the AWG mirror any other Southern mainstream sport festival.

From the lighting of the flame to medal ceremonies with National anthems, the AWG are, in many ways, identical to Southern-based sporting festivals. While the cultural aspects of the AWG are often used to support the notion that the Games are indeed uniquely Northern, the cultural aspects are often marginalized, with the cultural contingent for each team rarely consisting of more than a handful of performers, in contrast to the hundreds of athletes that each team is invited to bring to the Games. In fact, the 2002 Games were the first to spend as much on the cultural events as on the sporting events. However, it is typically only those sporting activities and their athletes that reside comfortably within (or are assimilated into) the mainstream sport system that are viewed as *legitimate sport/athletes*, with those activities that are characteristically associated with non-Eurocanadian groups instead being seen as *cultural events/performers* (Paraschak, 1983). Thus, Dene Games and Arctic Sports tend to be considered as some combination of legitimate sport and cultural display, resulting in implications that will be discussed below.

Another way of examining assimilation is in terms of gender roles and participation in the Dene Games. As gender, like culture, is a social construct, we are able to examine changes in gender roles by using Berry's (2001) acculturation framework. In the past, Dene girls and women in the NWT rarely participated as athletes in most traditional games, and instead participated by teaching and supporting competitors and/or crafting equipment (Giles, 2004; Heine, 1999). This practice was reflected in the fact that until 2002 the only available category for competition in the Dene Games was for Open Men (i.e., men over the age of 18). However, at the 2002 AWG a Junior Men's category was added. After gaining support from the Yukon and Alaska, the NWT's proposal to have a Junior Women's category added to the Games was approved by the AWGIC and a Junior Women's category came to fruition at the 2004 Games (I. Legaree, personal communication, May 16, 2003).

Pressure for the creation of the Junior Women's category came from a number of places. Girls and women compete in Dene Games far more frequently in the Yukon and Alaska than they do in the NWT and, as such, these contingents had a strong interest in opening the AWG experience to their female athletes (B. Walker, personal communication, March 3, 2004). The NWT-based Mackenzie Recreation Association also appealed to the AWGIC to have a category for girls (MRA minutes, 2001, p. 23). Finally, pressure in less visible forms stemming from the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 2001) and general gender equity practices cannot be ruled out as playing large, though perhaps less public, roles in the addition of a category for girls.

The addition of women to Dene Games at the 2004 AWG in an "add women and stir" manner created some difficulties for participants and organizers alike. Prior to the Games, most of the female participants had had limited exposure to opportunities to practice their skills in the five events that comprise the Dene Games: snowsnake, pole push, stick pull, finger pull, and hand games. A lack of familiarity with the rules of these events resulted in an *ad hoc* change in the competition schedule so as to allow the Open Men's category to compete first, thus providing both Junior categories with opportunities to see how the events are intended to be contested. Many participants commented on the importance of having people to emulate in Dene Games, and viewed it as the most compelling reason for the continued existence of the Open Men's category (notably, only Arctic Sports and Dene Games still have adult categories at the AWG, as adult categories were removed from all other sports in previous years). Indeed, it appeared that the Junior competitors did gain valuable insight into techniques and culturally appropriate behaviours (such as shaking hands prior to and after competing). While the demonstration of such behaviour might be important, one might ask about the lack of women demonstrating such behaviour for the Junior Women. Research findings (e.g., Gould & Weiss, 1981) indicate that learning is more successful if the person demonstrating the behaviour/action is similar to the learner. Gender is one category in which similarities may prove compelling. For example, members of Junior Women's team competing for the NWT in Dene Games reported that they felt as though Dene Games were "a guy thing" and that having Open Women competitors would provide them with positive females to emulate (personal communication, March 1st, 2004).

The addition of young women into the Dene Games certainly has its opponents. An example of this resistance was manifested at the NWT Territorial Trials for Dene Games, which were held in Dettah, NWT. Though there appeared to be no demeaning or derogatory behaviour towards female competitors nor any vocal opposition to their participation, an article in *News/North*, which appeared shortly after the event, quoted organizer Bobby Drygeese as saying that some Elders were upset with the fact that girls were participating in Dene Games (Scott, 2004). Furthermore, while the overall attitude towards the girls' participation in the Dene Games at the AWG themselves outwardly appeared to be overwhelmingly positive, there were those who felt differently. For instance, in Janvier, Alberta, the location of the stick pull event for the 2004 AWG, one spectator commented that, based on tradition, girls should not be participating in the events, and that women spectators should not even be sitting as close as they were to the competitors (Anonymous, personal communication, March 3, 2003). However, this perspective can be juxtaposed with the words of another spectator. The officials had commented that stick pull emerged as a winter game because it was a way for men to train for pulling fish out of the water. One female spectator said succinctly, "women would have pulled the damn fish out of the water, too" (Anonymous, personal communication, March 3, 2003).

Disagreement also arose when the topic of girls drumming for hand games was broached at a coaches' meeting at the AWGs. After some discussion, it was decided that girls would not be permitted to drum, as the owners of the drums did not want girls to come into contact with them, believing that it could have a negative impact on those to whom the drums belonged. This decision was met with the following responses from the Junior Girls from Team NWT: One believed that the decision was "sexist," another commented that the decision was "bad" and that "they should let us try," while another one said that the decision "sucked" (personal communications, March 5, 2003). Thus, different understandings of Dene traditions – for example, if the job of pulling fish out of the water would have been an exclusively male pursuit – leads to different understandings of just who should be participating, and in what fashion, in Dene Games and, thus, how closely the Dene Games at the AWG should reflect mainstream Eurocanadian sport.

Separation (minimum cultural learning, minimum cultural shedding)

An example of separation – as well as another example of opposition to women's involvement in Dene Games - can be found in the Denendeh Traditional Games Association's (DTGA) efforts to create a Territorial Sport Organization (TSO) of sorts for Dene Games (Kay, 2002). The multi-community Mackenzie Regional Dene Games has had a twenty-five year history in the NWT, yet during this period of time, and despite the entrenched support of and organization for these Games, a TSO for Dene Games has not emerged. In 2002, the DTGA attempted to form a TSO outside of the Territorial Sport Federation's (Sport North) and the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Western Arctic's frameworks, as it felt that these organizations were unable to meet its needs. However, the DTGA encountered some stumbling blocks when it announced that, based on the notion that women did not play Dene Games in the past, they would not support women's involvement in Dene Games. Viewed by the Government of the NWT as holding a position that ran counter to the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the DTGA's attempt to form a TSO-like entity ran aground.

Analogies between the DTGA and the early growing pains of the Northern Games exist and are informative. The Northern Games is an Inuit cultural/sporting festival that was established in July of 1970 in response and resistance to the Arctic Winter Games (Paraschak, 1997). The Northern Games incorporated aspects of traditional Inuit games into a "[E]urocanadian-derived concept of a trans-Arctic festival in order to help create this emergent festival" (Paraschak, 1997, p. 12). Despite the heavy Eurocanadian influence on its structure, many federal government officials chose to view the Northern Games as more of a cultural event than a sporting event, and thus showed reluctance to help to fund the Games through sport funding programs. In response, the Northern Games Association stated, "sports in the south also are cultural events with a different purpose (i.e., a winning purpose in a win-oriented culture). Must we buy this ethic to be funded" (Northern Games Association cited in Paraschak, 1997, p. 12)?

Perhaps tired of the proliferation of Southern-derived sport, the Northern Games Association felt that the only way that it would be able to find a home in a sporting/cultural festival that would suit their needs was to create a unique one of their own. The Northern Games philosophy encourages "participation over excellence and an atmosphere of camaraderie and self-testing rather than competitive equality" (Paraschak, 1997). While competition is not the driving force, neither is time - the event schedule serves as only a rough guide. Though some aspects of the Northern Games differ markedly from mainstream Southern sport, rationalization, bureaucratization, standardization, and quantification (Guttmann, 1978) have all become increasingly prevalent in the Northern Games. Indeed, in some ways the Northern Games have also come to mirror the Southern-derived events that they originally abhorred.

Both the Dene Games and the Northern Games have struggled to find their own space in the landscape of sport and recreation in the North. Sometimes viewed as culture, sometimes viewed as sport, sometimes viewed as little more than curiosities, the desire to remain separate from mainstream sporting festivals is understandable. However, that separation makes integration into the AWG framework difficult. Dene Games enthusiasts have steadfastly pointed out that they are not Arctic Sports. A past AWG participant spoke of feelings of frustration when he received a medal for competing in Dene Games that was inscribed with "Arctic Sports" on the back (B. Walker, personal communication, March 3, 2004). Vehemently resisting an identity as Arctic Sports and also as mainstream sport, Dene Games have had to etch out a space in which to exist and, perhaps most problematically, grow.

In the past, Dene Games were far more spontaneous and far less codified. With their growth, Dene Games have had to endure forms of standardization in order to allow for uniform competition at the AWG. Nevertheless, Dene Games separate themselves from AWG sports in many ways, including rejecting the term "sport," and also by adapting rules in an *ad hoc* fashion in order to better reflect the practices of the Aboriginal groups who are hosting the event or to meet the needs of competitors or officials. Difficulties emerge, however, when differing opinions exist between the way the manual/technical package describes a rule and interpretations of the way the games were played in the past. For example, several officials at the 2004 NWT Territorial trials for Dene Games commented unfavourably on what they perceived to be the large number of protests that were filed (personal communications, January 31, 2003). These officials suggested that an air of collegiality and amicability was more appropriate than the confrontation and hostility that pervade many Eurocanadian sports.

Marginalization[1] (minimal cultural learning, maximal cultural shedding)

In attempting to remain distinct from AWG sports, Dene Games officials and organizers have stressed the need for cooperation between teams, flexibility in interpretations of the technical package, and the desire for a distinct culture around the Dene Games. Nevertheless, difference is not always appreciated. During the finger pull competition at the 2004 Games, several spectators walked out of the Keyano College theatre venue shaking their heads at how hard it was to watch the relatively small, often partially hidden, event. In their minds, the event was not spectator-friendly and, as a result, they left. However, amid these comments, officials and coaches expressed their own concerns about the venue. "We're not a spectacle," said one official, who did not appreciate having the competitors and officials up on a stage under the glare of bright theatre lights in an attempt to make the event more spectator friendly (Anonymous, personal communication, March 5, 2003). Thus, the spectators' call for a spectacle and the organizers' unwillingness to put one on serves as an example of how attempts at separation can, unfortunately, lead to marginalization.

Concerns around the potential marginalization of girls' involvement in the Dene Games appeared to be, for the most part, unfounded. While there were very few spectators at the Junior Girls' snowsnake event, the fact that the event took place at the end of a long day of competition and was coupled with cool temperatures was likely the reason for the sparse crowd rather than lack of interest. Women's involvement, on the other hand, could be viewed differently. Most of the officials and organizers with whom I spoke felt that it was appropriate to add a Junior Women's category prior to an Open Women's category to allow for the gradual growth of the Games. However, in light of the fact that participants in an Open Women's category could provide guides for appropriate behaviour – and the Open Men's demonstration of culturally appropriate behaviour is used time and again as a reason why that category simply cannot be eliminated – for young girls as well as a training ground for Dene Games coaches, it seems unusual that no Open Women's category exists. Some individuals have pointed to the problems that are experienced with some Open Men's category participants on a consistent basis - intoxication and curfew violations – as reasons why an Open Women's category has not yet been added: as all Open categories might be abolished by the AWGIC, why add a category only to have it taken away? This line of reasoning results in women being punished for the actions of a few men and the marginalization of potential Open Women competitors. Many of the Junior Women who participated in the Dene Games called for the addition of an Open Women's category, stating that it was "unfair" not to have one. Many male participants, too, called for the addition of an Open Women's category, with one coach saying that Dene Games are a family and that the family needs to get bigger (B. Walker, personal communication, March 3, 2003).

The fact that young women at the AWG compete in what have typically been viewed as male events can also be viewed as marginalizing games that Dene women did play in the past, such as games involving moosehide balls. As noted above, opposition to women's involvement in Dene Games remains. Women who are unwilling to shed their traditional beliefs and compete in what they view as men's games are relegated to the sidelines. Attempts to include games in which women were typically participants might help to appease those who object to women's participation in, for example, hand games. However, regional differences in gender-based participation, as well as the fact that some women would feel marginalized if they were prohibited from participating in the current games that comprise the Dene Games, points to the fact that there is no easy solution to this matter.

Integration (moderate to substantial cultural learning along with minimal culture shedding)

Integration has been identified as the most favourable strategy for acculturation (Berry, 2001). Kalin and Berry (1995), however, identified four pre-existing conditions necessary for integration: "the widespread acceptance of the value to society of cultural diversity…; relatively low levels of prejudice…; positive mutual attitudes among ethnocultural groups…; and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all individuals and groups" (Berry, 2001, p. 5). Despite the multicultural, cosmopolitan rhetoric that pervades race discourse in Canada, these conditions remain a utopia,[2] with the AWG and the sport and recreation system in the NWT being no exception.

While Dene Games have been a part of the AWG since 1990, they remain on the periphery of sport and recreation in the NWT. In fact, many AWG participants reported that they only play Dene Games for Regional Trials, Territorial Trials, and the AWG, with few opportunities to practice their skills in recreation or physical education programs in their communities. Thus, though Dene Games have been integrated into the AWG, the integration remains partial at best, with participants, officials and organizers struggling to create Dene Games that they feel reflect their culture, yet also fit the parameters of a multi-sport spectacle. Integration into the larger sport and recreation field in the NWT still remains elusive. Without a TSO, the Dene Games will likely continue to struggle for legitimacy, and quite possibly funding, within the NWT sporting community.

Integration in Dene Games needs to be examined through a bi-directional lens. While attempts have been made to integrate the Dene Games into the predominantly Eurocanadian-centric AWG, non-Aboriginal athletes are now participating in Dene Games. Attempts at integration into Aboriginal physical practices have been seen in other areas. In his text, *Playing Indian*, Deloria (1998) describes the activities of selfproclaimed Indian lore hobbyists, individuals who, in the 1960s, would come together for weekend gatherings where they would "wear Indian costumes, sing and dance Indian, and trade" (Powers cited in Deloria, 1998, p. 128). The response to these hobbyists who blurred ethnic and social boundaries was mixed. Conklin (1994) quotes one powwow dancer as stating, "we didn't know what to call our white brothers. We didn't know whether to call them white boys or hobbyists" (p. 19). The integration of non-Aboriginals into Dene Games has also had some mixed results. Some non-Aboriginal participants in the 2004 Dene Games were labeled "freaks" (Anonymous, personal communication, March 2, 2003) by members of Team NWT for what NWT team members described as inappropriate behaviour. This behaviour included but was not limited to: shirtless participation in snowsnake (where it was well below freezing), grunting, cheering, and winking at the crowd in what was considered to be a showboating manner. While this behaviour drew laughter, it also drew criticism from at least one official, who mentioned that such behaviour was unbecoming and was inconsistent with the usual tone of Dene Games (Anonymous, personal communication, March 4, 2004). In addition, the distinctively cultural aspects of Dene Games led to one Inuvialuit member of Team NWT confess that he felt "out of place" playing Dene Games as a non-Dene person, yet he still enjoyed playing the games.

Yet another indication of the difficulties associated with attempts at integration can be seen in a motion made at the 2003 Dene National Assembly. In a motion that was carried unanimously, the Dene Nation resolved that "any and all NWT groups wanting to implement Dene games must get the approval of the Dene people before doing so; and that the [Government of the NWT] and its affiliates formally recognize and acknowledge the [Denendeh Traditional Games] Association" (online, July 1, 2004). Thus, in its attempt at integration into the sport and recreation delivery system, the Dene Nation views gaining control over the development and implementation of Dene Games as imperative. Nevertheless, such a move might be viewed as segregationist by some GNWT and Sport North officials, who might feel that a sign of the full integration of Dene Games would result in it being controlled and administered in the same fashion as other sports and recreational activities in the NWT. Hence, the integration of Dene and non-Dene peoples and, as mentioned earlier, women, into the Dene Games, which are themselves struggling to integrate into the AWG and the sport and recreation delivery system in the NWT, creates points of friction.

Conclusions

The new Canadian Sport Policy (Government of Canada, 2002a) and the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Priorities for Collaborative Action 2002-2005 (Government of Canada, 2002b) suggest that barriers to Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport and recreation need to be identified and addressed. However, what this research demonstrates is that sport and recreation are microcosms of larger societal issues, such as racism, sexism, and the struggle for Aboriginal self-determination.

The Dene Games portion of the AWG and women's participation in these Games do not map neatly onto just one corner of Berry's (2001) acculturation matrix; instead, they leave no corner untouched. Attempts to address barriers thus become all the more difficult. Perhaps the most logical starting point to facilitate a form of integration that would satisfy the greatest number of people is to revisit the preconditions that Kalin and Berry (1995) identified as being necessary for integration: "the widespread acceptance of the value to society of cultural diversity…; relatively low levels of prejudice…; positive mutual attitudes among ethnocultural groups…; and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all individuals and groups" (Berry, 2001, p. 5). Indeed, Berry (1991) points out that "[i]ntegration can only be 'freely' chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity" (cited in Berry, 2001, p. 4). Finally, Berry (2001) notes that integration "can only be pursued in societies that are explicitly multicultural" (p. 5). While Canada purports to be an explicitly multicultural country,[3] the examples provided above draw the reality of multiculturalism and thus the possibility of integration into question.

Nevertheless, ways in which integration might be fostered through sport can still be explored. Education and exposure[4] are two ways in which integration can start to be achieved. While Heine's (1999) Dene Games manual is a valuable tool for teaching Dene Games in the school system, it alone is not enough. Teaching Dene Games is not as simple as teaching basketball, where a ball is readily available in the school's supply cupboard and both the teacher and the students already have a fairly good grasp of the basics of the game. In the education system, it appears that Dene Games have to negotiate the culture/sport divide, with teachers having to decide if Dene Games should be taught as part of the cultural curriculum (e.g., *Dene Kede*[5]) or as part of the physical education curriculum. If the teacher is not from the area, s/he would first have to familiarize him/herself with the Games, determine which Elders it would be appropriate to consult concerning playing the Games in the school (i.e., if boys and girls can both play, if they can play against each other, if the Games should be played at all), make or obtain the necessary equipment, likely bring in a paid local expert (and thus secure funding) to facilitate teaching the Games, and then, finally, the Games can be taught. The multitudes of hoops through which teachers have to jump make it difficult for already overburdened educators to have Dene Games as part of the curriculum, while the politically charged climate surrounding a typically Eurocanadian teacher teaching Dene Games makes some teachers uneasy. In-service training for physical education teachers and the provision of local experts by the school boards would help to eliminate at least some of these barriers. With a greater number of participants, a Territorial Dene Games School Championship would be possible. In-service training for recreation providers – who face similar constraints as their physical education colleagues – would also be beneficial. As a result of these efforts, education, exposure, and greater levels of participation would all be achieved.

There are, of course, limitations to this application of Berry's (2001) framework. Not all individuals privilege race over other characteristics, such as sexual orientation or gender, and not all individuals acculturate in the same way. Indeed, Berry himself found differences between group and individual acculturation. So how do we go about cultivating a politics of difference and cosmopolitanism for sport in Canada? Young (1992) suggests that the unoppressive city offers a model of "social relations without domination in which persons live together in relations of mediation among strangers with whom they are not in community" (p. 303). She implores that

> [w]hatever the label, the concept of social relations that embody openness to unassimilated otherness with justice and appreciation needs to be developed. Radical politics, moreover, must develop discourse and

> institutions for bringing differently identified groups together without suppressing or subsuming the difference. (p. 320)

In short, she calls for the integration that Berry (2001) favours – an integration that we can recall relies upon pre-existing factors that currently do not exist within the Canadian sport and recreation system, and within Canada as a whole. To facilitate a politics of difference and favourable models of integration, sport/games/cultural groups who do not identify with mainstream sport must be given greater funding to develop their sports/games in ways that they see fit, and, above all, must be granted representation and consideration on local, national and international levels. As mentioned above, school curricula need to be more inclusive of non-mainstream sporting activities, while sport participants and organizers also need to make room for and accept difference. Instead of feeling threatened by non-mainstream physical practices, sport participants and organizers alike need to recognize that sport can be a positive way of celebrating differently identifying groups.

Endnotes

[1] Within this section, the term marginalization will be treated in two fashions: as the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Thompson, 1995) describes the term – “make or treat as insignificant” (p. 833), and as Berry (2001) outlines it - minimal cultural learning and maximal cultural shedding involving “little possibility…[of] cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination.” (p. 2.4)

[2] Canadians consistently place First Nations members on one of the lowest rungs of the ethnic hierarchy, which is a ranking of the comfort level individuals have when in the presence of various ethnic groups, *despite* a lack of significant contact with them (Berry, 1998).

[3] The 1971 Multiculturalism Policy of Canada purported to confirm the rights of Aboriginal peoples and the status of Canada's two official languages. In 1988, the Canadian Parliament passed *The Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, an Act that recognizes multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society.

[4] According to the contact hypothesis, encounters that involve equal numbers from each side, that are mutually rewarding and pleasant, and that involve a goal which requires interdependent and cooperative action, will foster more amicable feeling between parties. (Alcock, Carment, and Sadava, 1998).

[5] *Dene Kede* is the title of the culture-based education program developed by the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment for students residing in Dene communities in the NWT.

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Letting stories loose in the world

A version of this paper will appear as:

Giles, A. R. (in press). Letting stories loose in the world. In Castleden, H., Danby, R., Giles, A. R., & Pinnard, J. P. (Eds.). *Psychrophilia: Collected works on Northern Studies*. Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Circumpolar Institute. Press.

According to writer Richard King (2003), "The truth about stories is that that's all we are" (p. 32). This chapter is a compilation of stories. They are stories that are about other people. They are stories about myself. The stories about other people are stories about myself. The stories about myself are about other people. Don't let the casual seeming nature of this text – it isn't filled with your usual gratuitous referencing - fool you. These are difficult stories to tell.

I have a secret. Lean in – I don't want to say it too loudly. It has been eating away at me. It's a big one. Ready? The residents of Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake, Tthedzehk'edeli/Jean Marie River, and Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson did not one day call me up and ask me to do research on/with them.

Whew. It's out.

"[O]nce a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world" (King, p, 10, 2003)

Some of my stories are about the difficulties of conducting research that falls into the politically correct category of community-based, responsive research.

The Alberta ACADRE Network conducts 'responsive research' which simply means that the health research issues are identified by community and that community is an active partner in the design, development, collection of data and analysis of the research. (ACADRE website) I have not exactly followed ACADRE's example. Am I a bad researcher?

Or to be more accurate, I suppose, some of my stories are about *not* conducting research that really fits into the politically correct category of community-based, responsive research. I am a community-based researcher who does not believe in uncomplicated communities. I am a fragmented community-based researcher. And the stories that follow – stories from field notes, musings on the ethics of research licences, problematising notions of community, and the misguided (post)colonial apologetic - are about just that.

Ethics and/of Northern Research

If one decides to play by the rules of research in the NWT, as set out by the Government of the NWT (GNWT), the first task that one must complete prior to starting one's research is a NWT Research Licence application. According to the NWT Scientists Act,

> No person shall carry on scientific research in or based on the Territories, or collect specimens in the Territories for use in scientific research, unless (a) he or she is the holder of a licence issued under this Act; or (b) the research consists solely of archaeological work for which a permit has been issued under the *Northwest Territories Archaeological Sites Regulations* made under the *Northwest Territories Act* (Canada). (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1988)

Part of the extensive research licensure process involves what the Aurora Research Institute (ARI), the organization that issues research licences on behalf of the GNWT, calls "community consultation":

> Community consultation is a vital part of the licensing procedure: **a licence application will not be processed if appropriate community consultation has not taken place**. You must start this process at least 3 months before starting your research….If your project will involve

> residents of the NWT as subjects or informants, Aurora Research Institute requires *written confirmation that you have discussed your plans with the agency(ies) and/or community(ies) affected and have received approval to proceed.* (Aurora Research Institute, 2004, p. 7; authors' emphasis)

My research focuses on Dene women's changing involvement in Dene Games in three NWT communities (Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake, Tthedzehk'edeli/Jean Marie River, Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson), with an additional focus on the new Junior Girls component to the Dene Games portion of the Arctic Winter Games (AWG). Thus, in order to conduct my research in the NWT, I had to engage in community consultations with/seek approval from the following organizations: Liidlii Kue First Nation, Sambaa K'e Dene Band, Jean Marie River First Nation, Dehcho First Nations, the Village of Fort Simpson, Metis Local #52, The Sport North Federation, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, the North Slave Metis Alliance, and the Yellowknives Dene First Nations.

Community/Com-mutiny/Com-mute-ity

The term "community" is usually employed to suggest a form of unity, affiliation, and/or cohesion between individuals or groups of people. As a result of the small population and familial bonds that exist between members of many NWT communities, it is reasonably easy to romanticize the cohesion between its residents. Indeed, it is far easier to think of groups and settlements as communities rather than complex groupings of people who may not identify with a feeling of community at all.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this paper, I am a fragmented communities-based researcher. The process through which I came to such an epistemological point was one that was rife with disappointment in my own idealistic beliefs of community. According to Frazer and Lacey (1993),

> We like to think that we live in 'communities' which evince the values of 'community' – which are capable of providing support, solidarity, reciprocity, love. But we fear – indeed we know – that in many respects we do not live in such communities. Even the 'communities' which approximate most closely the cosy image – the family, the club – fall short of the ideal. (p. 135)

Young (1992) points out that the dream of community, of "expressing a desire for selves that are transparent to one another, relationships of mutual identification, social closeness and comfort" (p. 300), is one that is understandable. Nevertheless, she finds the dream to be politically problematic because "those motivated by it will tend to suppress differences among themselves or implicitly to exclude from their political groups persons with whom they do not identify" (p. 300)

Though, as Young (1992) points out, we do dream of warm/fuzzy communities, there seems to be ample evidence that they do not exist. Why, then, do we continue to perpetuate the farce that they do in fact exist somewhere out there – with "out there" often being Indigenous communities. In his text *The Imaginary Indian*, Francis (1992) contrasts the idea of Indigenous peoples with that of the Indian. He argues that "when Columbus arrived in America there were a large number of different and distinct indigenous cultures, but there were no Indians. The Indian is the invention of the European" (p. 4). Indeed, his text is "about the images of Native people that White Canadians manufactured, believed in, feared, despised, admired, taught their children. It is a book about White – and not Native – cultural history" (p. 5). I would argue that one of the images/beliefs that White Canadians have manufactured about Indians is the notion of the Indian community. Where Europeans/Eurocanadians failed in creating a cohesive, unproblematised community, Indian communities were imagined to have succeeded. Through the ARI's research licence process, these Indian communities are imagined to still exist.

> "Europeans…projected onto Native peoples all the misgivings they had about the shortcomings of their own civilization: the Imaginary Indian became a stick with which they beat their own society. The Indian became the standard of virtue and manliness against which Europeans measured themselves, and often found themselves wanting" (Francis, 1992, p. 8).

Beyond a fun play on words, I have called this section community/com-mutiny/com-mute-ity quite deliberately. The dream of community plays itself out in research, particularly so-called community-based research that involves community consultations, in a number of interesting ways: one way is that the illusion of the uncomplicated community is conveyed through unproblematised, simplistic representations; another is that some individuals are portrayed as resisting the dream, as being mutinous on the good ship community; finally, those who do not take part in the shared delusion are either not interviewed, remain silent, or are rendered mute, their interview transcripts ending up hidden within the recycling bin icon on researchers' computers. In this chapter, and indeed in my entire dissertation, I have little interest in perpetuating the community myth. I also have little interest in contributing to the body of knowledge from researchers who pretend that their research went along in a perfect, unproblematic manner. Indeed, I hope to show the impossibility of doing community-based research, and that the impossibility results not from a researcher's failure to engage in proper community consultations, but from the impossibility of the realization of the dream of community.

To critique community is not to deny the existence of communities, but to critique unproblematised, simplistic representations of "community." I engage in such a critique to open up understandings of community to show what is left out or denied in construing community in a very particular, homogenous fashion.

One small step for Sambaa K'e, one giant leap for Audrey's dissertation

I entered into community consultations with the Sambaa K'e Dene Band with great trepidation.

Describing it as terror and anthropological angst would be more honest. I would say Truthful, but I don't believe in Truth, either.

My interest in Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake was driven by my experiences as the swimming pool supervisor in neighbouring Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson during the summer prior to starting graduate school. While in "Simpson," as the locals call it, people told me stories of women not being permitted to swim in Trout Lake, for reasons that ranged from menstrual practices to the appearance of a monster in the lake. As my assistant had run a week long waterfront program for children in Trout Lake and had heard nothing of this phenomenon, I became interested in what was happening there. So, my interest, which became a research question a few short months later, was driven by curiosity. It was not driven by community interest.

The safer way to state the previous sentence: It was not, at least initially, driven by community interest.

Obtaining approval for my NWT Research Licence in Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake was quite easy. Shane Thompson, Senior Recreation Development Officer for the Mackenzie Region, approached the community on my behalf. I assume that he encouraged them to allow me to do my research there. I know that he told the community that I would run a waterfront program and teach swimming, boat safety, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation classes all summer. I faxed the Band Office my research licence proposal, in which I outlined my research. I also telephoned the Band Office numerous times to ensure that the consultation form had been signed and then faxed to the ARI to allow for the processing of my research licence. For my efforts and my one hundred dollar fee, I received an attractive certificate with an actual gold seal of approval in the mail several months later; my community consultation had been successful. My research licence could be waved in the air to indicate my acceptance into the community. Or so I thought.

Field Notes: Fort Simpson, Fri. May 3, 2002

Right now, I should be in Trout Lake. And I'm not.

I went home and had lunch with Deb and Tyrone [in Fort Simpson], said my goodbyes around town, did abs, and packed Panther [my guinea pig] up. And then…there's always that fucking "and then" in the North. Nothing goes according to plan…Maybe that is the plan? Anyway, Ruby Jumbo, the Band Manager with whom I was supposed to fly into Trout, called to say that I should go in on Sunday because Marilyn Loman will be coming out and I can split the charter. Also, they were supposed to have a community meeting tomorrow, but that has been postponed until Monday. Ruby thought it would be best if I waited until Sunday so that I didn't "show up *unexpected* and make some people upset." Dennis Deneron, the Chief, is supposed to explain what I'm doing in the community on Monday. Sigh. I wonder what's really going on? As for the UNEXPECTED part of it…I've been telling them about it [my research] since SEPTEMBER, haven't I? Maybe October at the latest. Unexpected…

In general, no one, other than the Band Manager and the Chief, seemed to have much of a clue as to why I, along with my apparently alarmingly large rodent companion, had appeared in the settlement all of a sudden - renting a house, no less. There were some murmurs concerning me teaching swimming lessons and boat safety, but that was, by and large, the extent of it. I guess I was expecting a well-briefed community that was ready to roll up its collective sleeves and dive into a research project. Clearly, though, this was not the case. But the community consultation form had been signed, had it not? I was a bit perplexed. This was my first introduction into the fragmentation of the term "community," and the ensuing problems with so-called community consultations, problems that would become all the more apparent not only in Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake, but also in the later phases of my research.

Field Notes: Sambaa K'e/Trout Lake July 17, 2002

I had dinner, transcribed for an hour, and then Phoebe [my research assistant] called Peter [a fictitious name], who said I could interview him. Well, he had changed his tune by the time I got there. He said (Phoebe told me afterwards as he was yelling in Slavey) that I would make big money and they'd never see any of it and that he and [his wife] had information but that they didn't want to disclose it to me. I thought he might still talk to me about the games he played growing up, but he said "doesn't she understand that no means no?" Peter's wife said that they didn't have time to play games when they lived on the land. We pretty much ran out of there. Dejected, we moved on to [another Elder's] house. She said…she wanted to know if the others were doing it [getting interviewed], and said that maybe she'd do it when I got back [from the North American Indigenous Games], which Phoebe took to mean I shouldn't bother… I feel like they hate me. Granted, Joe came to my door [asking] to be interviewed and everyone else has said yes, but I just feel really hurt and misunderstood. How do you explain that you're trying to write a "book" that no one will ever read, that it's an academic exercise? [My sister] Sarah said I should just call it a school project. I'm just really disappointed that people would think that way about me….I feel embarrassed. Christ. An anthropological nightmare.

Dettah: Disappointment, disillusionment, and doubt

I had planned to attend the Regional and Territorial Trials for the Dene Games category of the Arctic Winter Games (AWG) so that I could interview participants at these two events. As I had received the approval of the Sport North Federation and the AWG International Committee to conduct research at Regionals and Territorials, I had assumed that I had jumped through all of the necessary hoops to complete my research licence. However, several months later, after a nagging feeling would just not leave me, I contacted the ARI to find out if I needed to obtain permission to conduct research from the communities in which the Trials were to take place. Such additional consultations had struck me as superfluous, as I would be conducting research only on participants who would have signed consent forms or had their parent/guardian sign such forms and not specifically on residents of the communities in which the research was to take place. It turned out, however, that the ARI deemed it necessary for me to obtain permission from the hosts of the Regional and Territorial trials. As Dettah, NWT was slated to host both events, an ARI employee sent my research licence application to Dettah and to the North Slave Metis Alliance. Since my other eight community/agency consultations had proceeded in a fairly straight forward and seemingly problem-free manner, and because it appeared to me that approval from Dettah seemed almost guaranteed – what problem could they possibly have with research that did not really involve Dettah residents? – I began planning my research for the Trials. I was even cocky enough to book flights to Dettah for both sets of Trials. Then my research world came crashing down around me.

On November 19th, 2003, I received an email from the ARI indicating that my research licence application to conduct research at the Regional and Territorial Trials, which would take place in January and February respectively, had been approved by the North Slave Metis Alliance, but had not been approved by the Yellowknives Dene First Nations (YDFN). In a fax dated November 5, 2003, Chief Peter Liske of the YDFN wrote [in a fax from which I cannot directly quote because I was not granted permission to do so] that the Dene have been studied to death, that he could not see any potential benefits to my research, and that as an autonomous First Nation, the YDFN rejected the ARI's authority to issue research licences.

Here comes the brutally honest reflexivity. If everyone were this openly reflexive, I'd feel less alone in my research confessions. It's hard to admit that my research wasn't flawless. Are you preparing to judge me? I'm not perfect – I hope this isn't a surprise.

My encounter with the YDFN raised many questions in my mind about the ethical aspects of conducting research in the North, particularly the politics involved in the

ARI's research licensing process. First of all, I will admit that I should have handled the initial consultation with the YDFN in a more careful manner. It would have been more appropriate for me to call the Chief and discuss my proposed research with him prior to the ARI sending a fax to him. However, my lack of forethought in this area represented not so much a lack of planning or a deliberate oversight, but a certain level of naiveté. The thought of obtaining permission above and beyond the permission I had already received to conduct research that was taking place on First Nations land and did not involve their members did not initially even enter my mind.

I certainly learned my lesson. Learning the hard way sucks.

When I found out that my research licence had been rejected, I called on the "big guns" to come to my defense. Alison de Pelham, Executive Director of the Dehcho First Nations who had conducted her own graduate studies in the Deh Cho, was the first person I approached for help. As all of the communities in which I had conducted my research, with the notable exception of Dettah, fell under the umbrella Dehcho First Nations, she had been aware of my research activities from the start and had been a part of the approval process. After explaining my situation to her, Ms. de Pelham contacted the YDFN to advocate on my behalf. Her position was that I was conducting research that had been approved of by the Dehcho First Nations and, thus, I was conducting research in which they were stakeholders. I was hopeful that this vote of confidence for my research – from a First Nations group, no less – would help the YDFN to see the light, so to speak. Alison, however, was unsuccessful, and was told by a Band administrator in Dettah that investigations of menstrual practices were inappropriate. Furthermore, YDFN indicated that they were dissatisfied with an aspect of my research licence concerning control of the final product, my dissertation. In the research licence application, I had stated that if the YDFN disagreed with the content of my dissertation, I would provide a footnote explaining the differing views - which is what I had agreed upon with all of the other Indigenous groups with whom I had worked. The YDFN wanted definitive control over the content of my dissertation, which was something I felt I could not give them. When Ms. de Pelham was unable to obtain the results that I so desperately wanted, Sport North Federation Executive Director Doug Rentmeister attempted to help me. However, he, too, was unable to get the Chief to change his mind.

Field Notes: Nov. 19, 2003

[I received the] dreaded email from Sarah Kalhok [who works at the ARI]… It seems the Yellowknives First Nation Dene Band sent a strongly worded fax back to the ARI, saying that they don't want me to do my research there. I almost started to cry right there in the library.

Field Notes: Nov. 27, 2003

I called [Executive Director] Doug Rentmeister at Sport North and he called over to the Yellowknives Dene First Nations. After leaving various messages, he got the Chief's cell phone… He [the Chief] said a big, fat…NO. He says his people have too much research done on them, that the Elders are concerned about it,…and that the pace of change is happening too fast in the community…Whatever. It's all so pointless now. I feel like I've been punched in the stomach, the wind taken out of my sails, like I'm misunderstood, like people are deliberately wielding their power in such a way as to completely screw me over, though they don't even know me. I guess it's their postcolonial right… I just wonder what other members of the Band would think [if they were consulted]…Who the hell says research isn't political??? Nightmares do come true. At least I have fodder for my final chapter. This just all seems like a big waste of everyone's time.

Wed. Dec. 3rd, 2003

I had a bit of a breakdown on Monday night. I was talking to [a friend] and started saying how it was frustrating to watch something that you'd worked on for 2.5 years go down the tubes…then I started crying... It was probably good to get that out. I've been feeling sad and frustrated, but I've survived. The sun and the moon shall endure, the sun will rise again in the morning, life goes on…cliché after cliché, yet none can quite capture my grief over all of this.

In the end, being unable to conduct interviews at the AWG Trials had little impact on my research, as I was able to interview Team NWT Dene Games competitors at the AWG in Fort McMurray, Alberta. Nevertheless, the reactions – from both others and myself - to my failure to obtain a research licence to conduct research at the Regional and Territorial Trials illustrated many complex issues with somewhat painful simplicity. I believe that it speaks to continuing struggles with (post)colonialism, a troubling degree of paternalism that is a part of the research licencing process, and failings of notions of community.

The Empire Writes Back

In general, most people with whom I spoke expressed shock and outrage that my research licence had been denied, and typically asserted that there were politics at work that had undermined my application. Basically, they told me that they believed the refusal was not about me or my research, *per se*, but rather about the larger political situation at hand. Some suggested that my work with the Dehcho might have been seen as problematic to those in the Akaitcho region, as the two groups share a tense history with each other. Others suggested that Dene Games practices in Dettah, where, notably, women have not typically played hand games, are sexist and community members did not want their sexism to be widely known. As one person told me, “they know they’re sexist and it’s wrong, so they don’t want you to write about it” (Anonymous, personal communication, Nov. 21, 2003). While all of these theories may hold some merit, I believed and continue to believe that the refusal had everything to do with me and my research. The basic fact of the matter was that I am a white, Southern-based, academic attempting to investigate a sensitive topic for a project that the people of Dettah had every right to reject. The idea that the rejection of my application might have actually have been warranted, or at the very least a reasonable reaction to past colonial exercises in research, while painful to accept, must not be ignored.

In addition to leading me to question the value and purpose of my research, the rejection of my research licence also led me to question issues of paternalism associated with research licensure in the NWT. There is no doubt that many Indigenous groups have had negative and even devastating experiences with research and researchers (Smith, 1999). As a result of these experiences, as well as the experiences of countless other groups who have been victimized, research that is associated with a university must now undergo rigorous ethical review; indeed, each phase of my research was submitted to my faculty’s ethic review board. In typical cases, once a researcher has satisfied the ethical requirements as set out by her/his university, s/he would then be free to speak with any consenting adult, or any child who had his/her parent/guardian’s consent, within the bounds of his/her ethics approval. Permission is not required from the "community/communities" to which the consenting participant belongs. Why, then, is this so vastly different for residents of the NWT and other areas where research licences are required?

I feel the need to stress that I am not negating the horrendous experiences that some groups have had with research and researchers. This is a tricky part to write without sounding dismissive of the needs of Indigenous peoples – like another white researcher who just doesn't get it.

There is an argument that goes something like this: Indigenous peoples in Canada have been victimized in the past in many ways, including through the pursuit of research. Hence, researchers must be careful, hyper-vigilant, not to re-victimize these groups. As a result, in addition to going through university ethics, as part of the research licencing process, permission of NWT-based First Nation/Metis/Inuit governments/organizations *must* be obtained when one wants to conduct research with people who can be recognized as members of these governments/organizations. Furthermore, if the First Nation/Metis/Inuit government/organization fails to grant permission for the proposed research to take place, peoples falling under the jurisdiction of these governments/organizations cannot participate in the researcher's project, regardless of their own feelings and beliefs.

"[The current form of racism is] "a kinder racism that is cut with a genuine fondness for Natives and Native culture, a racism infused with a suffocating paternalism that can gently strangle the life out of a people" (King, 2003, p. 145).

The paternalistic underpinnings of the ARI's research licensing process are troublesome. In seeking permission from elected or designated community leaders, people's autonomy - their ability to choose their own level of involvement in any research project - is negated. If the Government of Canada were able to tell non-Indigenous Canadians that they could not participate in research on a certain topic (in a more direct fashion than it already does through the major funding agencies and their rules for Research Ethics Boards), there would surely be an uproar. As a result, adults who are more than capable of making decisions are disallowed not allowed to do so. Furthermore, the Government of Canada's Indian Act complicates the situation considerably. The Indian Act dictates exactly who is and can be a Status Indian. Thus, in a family, you might have a woman who is "Status," but who has non-Status/Metis children. You might have two first cousins, only one of whom is "Status." Hence, if the Metis Local in the town where this hypothetical family lives agrees to allow its members to participate in a proposed research project, but the First Nations group does not make such an agreement, you might have a case where people from the same family unit would be unable to participate in the same research project, *despite* how the family members might feel. Thus, in the attempt to allow First Nations/Inuit/Metis "communities" to exercise power, voices are silenced and First Nations/Metis/Inuit peoples are treated like children.

Field Notes: Fort Simpson, Feb. 3, 2004

I spent all of Saturday out at Dene Games in Dettah as a spectator/official…[A prominent local personality in Dene Games] told me that he thought it was stupid that I couldn't do my research and that I should just do it anyway. Another Dettah resident voiced his agreement. I bit my lip until it almost bled.

Ethics and Bi-Directional Agreements

In the world of Northern research, research licences are typically seen as a statement of the researcher's commitment to the community(ies) in which/with which s/he will conduct her/his research. Rarely, however, is the bi-directional nature of ethics ever given much consideration. For instance, what is the community's commitment to the research project? Where are the checks and balances to ensure that researchers are not exploited? In the hyper-vigilance afforded to Northern communities, have we lost site of community members' commitment and investment in the research project?

The Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) (2003) has developed a document entitled *Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North*. This document states that "scholarship and research take place among people with a stake in the work being done" (p. 3), and that "[h]igh quality research depends both on communities understanding the needs and concerns of researchers and on researchers understanding the needs and concerns of communities" (p. 4). The notion of a cohesive community that has collective needs and concerns is, as discussed above, problematic and plays itself out in research in some interesting, and – for me at least - somewhat amusing, ways.

Field Notes: Trout Lake: June 13, 2002

I've spent the past three days weeding, digging, and roto-tillering in the community garden and the previously uncultivated land adjacent to it…

June 15, 2002

I was at school by 9:15am and spent the day making sweet and sour sauce, cutting fish, setting tables, etc, etc.

Tues. July 2, 2002

[There was a knock at the door.] It was Betti Lyn asking me to roto-tiller for her mom tomorrow. I had no idea where they wanted roto-tillered, so I got her to call and ask. I'm to stop by the garden at 1pm tomorrow, which means that I should probably move my interview with Norma. Sigh. It'll be a busy day, especially since I wanted to get the buoy lines in for the start of swimming lessons.

In the winter of 2002, I dutifully filled out an NWT Research Licence and made the appropriate phone calls, this time seeking permission to conduct research in Tthedzehk'edeli/Jean Marie River (JMR), NWT. The process went very smoothly, and the paperwork was processed by the Jean Marie River First Nation and faxed back to the ARI within days. Once again, however, I arrived in the JMR and met with some confusion. Who was I, and what was I doing there? On my first day in town, the local children, unable to figure out why I was in the community, quickly told me that I could be one of their cousins. I achieved cousin status within a day, but I doubt very much that I ever achieved "researcher" status. When tagging along with community members on trips to Fort Simpson for groceries, I was introduced as The Swimming Instructor. "I'm also doing my Ph.D. research in JMR," I would add, trying to explain my presence more clearly. But it was to no avail. For Tthedzehk'edeli/JMR residents, I was The Swimming Instructor. Indeed, I came to realize that I was valuable to the community not as a researcher, but as The Swimming Instructor who provided free daily recreational activities. Thus, while the Chief and Council of Thedzehk'deli/JMR signed off on my research licence, and while I had visions of being welcomed into the community as a researcher, the bottom line was that I was there as The Swimming Instructor.

Fort Simpson, my final fieldwork location, provided another interesting experience in terms of learning of the community's commitment to my research. Once again, all of my research licences were completed without incident. As Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson is the headquarters for the Dehcho First Nations, a very politically active Aboriginal organization, and a place in which I had worked previously, I expected there to be significantly more interest in and perhaps support for my research. I was, however, once again proven wrong.

I will admit that I was disappointed that the Grand Chief of the Dehcho First Nations never returned my messages concerning an interview for my research, but I felt that was somewhat understandable considering how busy he was with the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline negotiations. However, I was crushed by the response that I received from the Liidlii Kue First Nations Office when I asked to look through their photo collection. I was told that the photos represented traditional knowledge and, as such, there would be a yet-to-be-determined fee attached to viewing the photos.

The sound of my bubble bursting was almost audible.

I had had my research licence signed by the community *with* which I was supposed to be conducting research - community-based research! – and they were going to charge me a fee for doing what I felt was their part in assisting with the research project. Where was the partnership? Had they not made an agreement to be part of the research process when they signed off on my research licence? Where was their commitment to the project? Didn't they understand that "[h]igh quality research depends both on communities understanding the needs and concerns of researchers and on researchers understanding the needs and concerns of communities" (ACUNS policy, 2003, p. 4)? In the end, thanks to a benevolent employee, I was able to view the photos. However, my experience left me disappointed, a bit jaded, and only served to reinforce my views about the problematic nature of community consultation.

Concluding Thoughts

King (2003) notes that "[s]tories are wonderous things. And they are dangerous" (p. 9). In sharing the above stories, in admitting that I did not conduct perfect research and publicly questioning the very licences that I require to conduct Northern research, I feel incredibly vulnerable. But I also feel a sense of catharsis. The communities that the ARI's research licence talks about are not the communities that I have encountered. Indeed, I don't believe that they can be found.

> "I tell the stories not to play on your sympathies but to suggest how stories can control our lives, for there is a part of me that has never been able to move past these stories, a part of me that will be chained to these stories as long as I live" (King, 2003, p. 9).

Ethics are, of course, an important part of conducting research. However, they are far more complex than the Tri-Council policy statement on *Ethical conduct for research involving humans* (Government of Canada, 1998), the Association for Canadian Universities for Northern Studies' (2003) *Ethical principles for the conduct of research in the North* , or the ARI's (2004) *Doing research in the Northwest Territories* would have you believe. Ethics in research involve day-to-day negotiations that cannot be written into ethics reviews and consent forms. In fact, just as Indigenous "communities" are in actuality very different from how they are imagined, ethics in research may also look very different from how they are currently imagined.

According to writer Richard King (2003), "[t]he truth about stories is that that's all we are" (p. 32). This chapter was a compilation of stories. They were stories that were about other people. They were stories about myself. The stories about other people were stories about myself. The stories about myself were about other people. Don't let the casual seeming nature of this text – it wasn't filled with your usual gratuitous referencing - fool you. These were difficult stories to tell.

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A conclusion of sorts

> *[W]e live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness. If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives."*
> *(Okri cited in King, 2003, p. 153)*

To pretend that my dissertation will offer the final, definitive answer to questions surrounding Dene women's changing involvement in physical practices, especially Dene Games, would be short-sighted and dishonest. Hence, I will make no such claims. Instead, in this text I have offered readers several stories – only a handful of the many possible stories that could have been constructed and (re)told. In concluding my dissertation, I am offered the opportunity to emphasize several points; a last ditch effort to ensure that some issues that have become theoretically, and in turn personally, important to me receive another few moments of attention. In particular, I feel a compulsion to present my research in a "nutshell," and also to say more[1] about issues concerning authenticity, tradition, and my understanding of this text.

And now, a moment for our sponsors

The people working at the organizations that have helped to fund my research will likely never read my dissertation in its entirety. As a result, I have submitted research findings and executive summaries to these organizations, short pieces of writing that inevitably present a rather simplistic (re)presentation of some very complicated issues. I have also been encouraged by some academics to develop a "cocktail party-appropriate" response to questions concerning my research findings, as no one, apparently, wants to hear a long, drawn out answer to the question, "what do you study?" My research reports and cocktail party responses have boiled down to what follows: The current state of physical practices, and particularly Dene games, has been influenced heavily by the influenza pandemic of the early 1900s, residential schooling, struggles for culturally meaningful curricula, drug and alcohol abuse, the implementation of satellite television and phones, the development of roads, and the loss of language. All of these issues have acted as constraints that have inhibited and/or enabled physical practices, most notably Dene games and women's participation in such games. Meaningful consultation, especially with residents of remote communities and particularly women, is necessary to develop policy that is better able to reflect the views and practices of a wider range of NWT residents. Furthermore, power relations between Indigenous groups and government and non-government organizations need to be interrogated and ultimately restructured in a way that recognizes the autonomy of Aboriginal peoples.

The cocktail party line of questioning and those on the receiving end of executive summaries inevitably call for answers to the question, "so, what should be done about Dene games?" Firstly, it is worth noting that although I have spent the past 200 pages finding problems with Dene games, they have been remarkably successful in many ways. These games have survived for hundreds of years and men, boys, and girls now participate in Dene games in international competition (i.e., the Arctic Winter Games). Furthermore, the Government of the NWT (GNWT) has been very supportive (Denendeh Traditional Games Association aside) of enhancing the profile of Dene games across Canada. Indeed, Dene games are becoming an enjoyable part of the physical education curriculum in many schools in the NWT, and even across Canada. Thus, I do not believe that Dene games need to be "fixed." What I do believe, however, is that Dene games and efforts to enhance participation in such games are much more complex and contested than some (e.g., the DTGA and the GNWT) would have people believe. By working with community members to surface subjugated knowledge, and by asking people in small, remote communities how they feel about Dene games - particularly women's participation in such games - I believe that I have expanded the discursive field of Dene games by contributing some new discourses and/or by reminding people of discourses that have been marginalized/forgotten. If anything, I hope that I have made people stop and think – if even just for a moment – about power relations, about who exactly benefits from the current way in which calls for "authenticity" and "tradition" operate in Dene games.

Tradition and Authenticity

People who view history and tradition in a static way often believe that it is only by capturing "the way it was" that we can achieve authenticity and capture traditions. In this view, Dene games that were played out on the land in "the old days" are traditional and authentic; thus, in order to maintain the tradition and authenticity of such games, subscribers to this point of view see as crucial the reproduction of environments, equipment, rules, etc. that might have been found hundreds, if not thousands of years ago.

Tenacious clinging to the past can result in ridiculous spectacles. In his article, "Der wilde Westen," Scanlon (1990) describes the annual pilgrimage that thousands of German men, women and children make to a field northeast of Koblenz, Germany to essentially "play Indian." In this article, an Aboriginal couple from Canada, Clifford and Vanora Big Plume, visit the field to take in the activities. Dressed in "a turquoise beaded vest over a blue plaid shirt, new blue jeans, beaded moccasins and a dark brown cowboy hat with an eagle feather" (p. 59), Clifford Big Plume stands out from the other participants, most of whom are dressed in full regalia. Upon seeing Big Plume, a German participant "instantly dismisses the real Indian's outfit as too garish: 'When you do this, it has to be right'" (p. 60). In failing to live up to a "pre-packaged ethnic stereotype" (Adams, 1984), the Big Plumes are dismissed as inauthentic and untraditional, in spite of the fact that they are living, breathing Aboriginal peoples.

One of my deep hopes is that those who stop to think about my work might later pause and find, for example, the above description of Mr. Big Plume to be deeply problematic. What I have attempted to display is that there is no such thing as performing/living/experiencing authenticity and tradition in the "right" way; participants, environments, equipment, rules, etc. for Dene games do not need to be held captive in a sealed box – a box that is often protected by applications of power, policies, and politics that are meant to operate in some very particular ways, e.g., protecting the privilege of one group over another. By returning to earlier discussions on constructionism, we can see that tradition and authenticity, like true/valid interpretations, are *produced*. For the aforementioned Germans, authenticity and tradition has been produced through understanding Aboriginal peoples through static stereotypes (in this case, produced by best-selling novels by German author Karl May). For some Dene games organizers and participants, authenticity and tradition are produced through the interpretation of ties, however tenuous they may be, to the past. Thus, practices and practitioners who diverge from carefully (re)produced representations of the past (e.g., female competitors in Dene games) are viewed as inauthentic and untraditional. In this text, I have no interest in attempting to locate and define what exactly is traditional and/or authentic, as I do not believe that such a thing can exist; it is this very point that I have sought to illustrate.

Indeed, I have offered multiple stories to disrupt notions of rigid traditions and, hence, authenticity to show the ways in which power, policies, and politics operate to quiet or even mute voices of dissent. It is this quieting/muting that serves to produce a very limited, stagnant understanding of authentic tradition.

By undermining the notion of authentic tradition, a fuzzy grey zone of sorts develops, one located between authentic/traditional and inauthentic/untraditional. In my view, it is in this fuzzy grey zone that we find richness. Thus, rather than viewing this fuzziness as problematic, I instead choose to view it as producing alternate texts that subvert taken-for-granted notions of authenticity and tradition. These conflicting, inconsistent narratives provide opportunities for the creation of new understandings of Dene games – for planting new stories, if you will - rather than informing "the understanding" of Dene games. As a result, girls and women can[2] become legitimate Dene games competitors, rather inauthentic wannabes infringing on authentic male space.

Gaining understanding

Just as the participants in this research project are incoherent, inconsistent, and always changing, so, too, am I. One experiences monumental changes in graduate school, and also throughout the course of four years of a very full life. Making sense of one's research and the experiences that have informed one's research becomes all the more challenging.

Authors have posited different ways in which anthropologists gain understanding and make sense of their fieldwork. Grimshaw (1999), for example, finds that "meaning…does not inhere in the specific moments of fieldwork themselves, rather it emerges from the patterns of associations in which they become embedded" (p. 129).

Beatty (1999) posits another hypothesis: "the growth of ethnographic understanding, is not a smooth upward curve, is at least a staggered progression, or perhaps a series of false starts and returns…The process is mysterious" (p. 78). Finally, James (1993) states, "my 'fieldwork moment' was…no blinding flash of insight nor magical meeting of minds; instead, more prosaically, it was a further shuffling of the pack of cards which produced, finally a full house" (p. 105). All of these authors assume that, at some point, the results of their fieldwork became clear. I have had, however, quite a different experience. After 87 formal interviews, countless informal discussions, months of pouring over transcripts, fieldnotes, and texts, I find that I am no closer to having the proverbial full house; whether I like it or not, the pack of cards is always being re-shuffled. Indeed, I simply cannot state that everything now makes sense – or even that *anything* really makes sense. Changing contingencies, beliefs, and experiences result in very shaky ground from which to make claims; climbing on top of a soapbox in such an environment becomes a very scary, ultimately dangerous endeavour.

As a result of contingent foundations of our shaky world, an attempt to present this dissertation as *the* definitive version of a work that will always be in progress, always be re-examined through newly critical eyes as I, and others, learn new things, would be dishonest and, as any good poststructuralist will point out, theoretically problematic. Thus, this writing presents my current understanding of my research, an understanding that will almost certainly change over time. Perhaps the Indigo Girls said it best in their song "Closer to Fine:"

There's more than one answer to these questions
pointing me in a crooked line

The less I seek my source for some definitive

The closer I am to fine.

Endnotes

[1] In his graduate seminar "The Sexual Politics of Black Masculinities," Gamal Abdel-Shehid would push us, his students, to "say more." It was in those moments of discomfort, the ones that made you squirm in your seat as you felt on an almost visceral level that you had little else to say, that insight that you did not know you possessed would somehow be exorcised from your mind. Within that spirit, I now squirm.

[2] Just because girls and women can be viewed as legitimate competitors does not ensure that they will be considered legitimate. Thus, in opening up the discursive field of Dene games, room can be made for women and girls. This, however, should not be taken to mean that they will be welcomed or treated as anything more than marginalized, token competitors.

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